

### Defense Department to Prune Senior Ranks, Freeze Staffing

Karen Parrish

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JAN. 6, 2011)

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department will reduce its senior ranks and freeze civilian staffing levels, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said today.

“The monetary savings from ... reductions in senior personnel will be relatively modest, and mostly consist of the extra staff and amenities that, by tradition, follow high rank,” Gates said.

The secretary and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke to reporters at the Pentagon on the results of defense efficiencies initiatives begun in May to trim support costs and ensure funding for military modernization.

The primary purpose of reducing senior rank structure is “to create fewer, flatter, more agile—and thus, more effective—organizations,” Gates said.

In announcing the second set of initiatives in August, Gates said he would appoint a senior task force to assess the number of positions for general and flag officers, and Senior Executive Service employees. As a result of that assessment, the department will eliminate more than 100 general officer and flag officer positions from the 900 it currently authorizes, the secretary said today.

“Of those, 28 are billets that were created after 9/11, primarily for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Gates said. “They will be reduced, as appropriate, as major troop deployments wind down.”

More than 80 other flag- or general-officer positions spread among the Services, the Defense Department, and the combatant commands “will be eliminated or downgraded,” Gates said.

Defense will also eliminate nearly 200 of the 1,400 civilian positions from the department’s Senior Executive Service or equivalent positions, Gates said.

As the department prunes its senior ranks, it also will put a check on overall staff numbers by freezing the number of employees at current levels for the next 3 years, Gates said.

“Since the beginning of this fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, we’ve been operating under a freeze in the number of positions, with very limited exceptions ... within the Office of

the Secretary of Defense, the defense agencies, and field activities and the combatant commands,” the secretary said.

Gates said he instructed those organizations to “conduct a clean-sheet review” to rebalance resources, staff, and functions within and across their components to reflect the department’s most pressing priorities.

“The resulting review produced a number of opportunities to trim the size of the workforce, yielding more than \$4 billion in savings over the next five years,” he said. “I will recommend to the president that we hold to these limits in overall DoD staff levels for the next three years.”

While new requirements may emerge that require further staff support, the secretary said, those needs should be met by shifting personnel from other, less important activities within the organization.

### Defense Official Outlines Pay Freeze Details

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JAN. 10, 2011)

Karen Parrish

WASHINGTON—Defense Department civilian employees affected by the federal pay freeze for 2011 and 2012 will still have the opportunity to receive performance awards, promotions, and normal longevity increases, a senior defense official said.

Pasquale “Pat” M. Tamburrino Jr., deputy under secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy, told American Forces Press Service in a recent interview that senior leaders are working to ensure that employees are treated fairly during the freeze.

“We value the contributions of our career federal employees, and we value their service to the nation. Nothing has changed there,” he said. From the time the pay freeze was announced, Tamburrino added, the emphasis has been on ensuring all federal employees receive equal treatment.

“Whether you’re the most junior civil servant on the first day of the job or you’re a member of the executive leadership team, it applies to you,” he said. Defense leaders, he noted, have been “very clear” in directing that the freeze should affect all employees equally.

“Not everything is covered by statute,” he said, noting that heads of agencies have some administrative discretion in some dimensions of pay. But guidance on the pay freeze instructs agency heads to manage administrative privileges the same way the president treated general pay increases in the executive order, he added.

You should not use that privilege to grant a pay raise," he said.

Tamburrino said he encourages managers to use the tools that have always been available to them—and still are—to reward employees.

"When it's appropriate, you give somebody a performance award," he said. "If you tell them the organization has five or six goals, and they do a lot of heavy lifting to help you get to those goals, then I think you should sit down as a leader and say, 'We have to recognize that.'"

Most employees, he said, want three things: clear guidance on the management team's priorities, the tools and resources necessary to complete their work, and coaching and feedback.

"Financial compensation is important because it is; we all have financial obligations that have to be satisfied," he said. "But what's really important as well is [that] you want to tell your employees, 'You're doing a really fine job.'"

President Barack Obama announced his intent for a 2-year pay freeze for federal civilian workers Nov. 29. Congress approved the proposal, and Obama signed it into law Dec. 22. The Office of Personnel Management issued a memorandum Dec. 30 to heads of executive departments and agencies, detailing how the freeze applies to the federal workforce in accordance with existing law and presidential guidance. The Defense Department issued guidance in line with OPM's the same day.

"It's a response to the difficulties the country is facing, and I think what's really good about it is [that] it's universal," Tamburrino said. "You have to have a very clear understanding of what's in and what's out, because that's what affects employees."

The freeze covers what have traditionally been known as general pay increases, he said, which normally take effect each January and consist of a combination of base pay and locality pay increases for most civilian employees. Federal civilian pay increased an average of 3.5 percent in 2008, 3.9 percent in 2009, and 2 percent in 2010, according to government figures.

"The president determined, based on the state of the economy, that those pay raises that are statutory in nature should not be granted [during the 2-year freeze]," Tamburrino said. According to the OPM guidance, the freeze, which extends through Dec. 31, 2012, affects some 2 million federal civilian

employees in most pay systems: general schedule, executive schedule, senior executive service, senior foreign service, senior-level and scientific, and professional. Postal employees and military servicemembers are not affected by the freeze. However, OPM officials said, the pay freeze policy may not apply to any increase that is required by a collective bargaining agreement that has already been executed.

Except for minor instances in Alaska, Hawaii, and other non-foreign areas, locality pay also is frozen, Tamburrino said.

"I think everybody recognizes [the pay freeze] was a really difficult decision," he said. "I think we did a tremendous job in issuing some very clear guidance, and I think the leadership of the Department of Defense did a really good job in making it very level and even across the department."

### **DoD Explores Post-NSPS Personnel Modifications**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JAN. 13, 2011)*

*Karen Parrish*

WASHINGTON—As the National Security Personnel System fades into history, the Defense Department is exploring new modifications to the personnel system, a DoD official said today.

John H. James Jr., who directs the Pentagon's NSPS Transition Office, said the effort is in the very early stages.

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act "specifically gives us the authority to investigate and design a modified system in the realm of an enterprise-wide performance appraisal system, high flexibilities in retention, and a workforce retention fund," James said.

The act authorizes the secretary of defense, in coordination with the director of the Office of Personnel Management, "to develop new regulations for the civilian workforce, which include fair, credible, and transparent methods for hiring and assigning personnel, and for appraising employee performance ... consistent with the existing general schedule pay system, without the need for any legislative change to that system."

Thus far, his office has hosted meetings with management and employee representatives to gather opinions on what those methods should be, James said.

"We had a huge conference out in Los Angeles in September where we had 200 employees—100 from labor and 100 from the management side—get together just to explore ideas of the kinds of things we'd like to see in a performance

management system, a workforce incentive fund, and hiring flexibilities," James said.

"We got a lot of great ideas from the organization, and we spent a lot of time getting to know each other and understanding different perspectives, which proved to be very valuable," he added.

The transition office has since met with labor partners in a planning group to set out the scope and authority of design teams to address those three authorities, James said.

"The deliberate approach that we're taking on the front end will pay dividends on the far end," he said. "Knowing the relationships, understanding different perspectives, making sure we take the time to ... put together a diverse design team."

His office plans to capture "the thoughts and ideas that are out there, especially out in the field," James said.

"In Los Angeles, we had both labor and management—employees and leaders—from around the country: different disciplines, different geographical areas, different commands, different Services," he said. "We got a plethora—a very good pot of really good ideas that we are going to give to the design team for them to evaluate."

### **Director Calls Personnel System Transition 'Rewarding'**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JAN. 13, 2011)*

*Karen Parrish*

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department's transfer of more than 170,000 civilian employees out of the National Security Personnel System since 2009 has been smooth, the transition's director said today.

John H. James Jr. said much of the credit for the transition goes to the Services.

"The components have done a very good job," he said, adding that his office had reviewed and approved the transition plan each of the Services submitted.

"Our guidance in the beginning was that we would have the least possible impact to employees and the least possible impact to mission," he said. "The components have accomplished that."

Most of the employees moved out of NSPS so far have returned to the general schedule pay system, James said. Those remaining in NSPS will predominantly return to other performance management systems.

When employees transferred to NSPS originally, most of the other performance management systems were effectively dismantled, James said. When employees later were required to move back into the previous systems when Congress abolished NSPS, "we needed a little bit more time to put those back in place," he said.

The Acquisition Demonstration Project and the Science Technology Reinvention Laboratory Demonstration Project are two such systems, James said, and most of the remaining NSPS defense employees will return to one or the other.

"There are other, smaller performance management systems that employees will be transitioning to, but those are the two big ones," he said.

The law governing NSPS transition specifically states employees must return to the system they came from, he said. Congress established NSPS through the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act and directed its repeal in the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, which also set the timeline for repeal completion.

"We started with approximately 226,000 employees in the NSPS performance management system," James said. "We have transitioned approximately 172,000—right around 75 percent—of the employees out of NSPS, which was the direction [for 2010] that we got from the deputy secretary of defense."

During the move from NSPS back to previous positions, each employee's job had to be reclassified, James said. Major changes in duties and responsibilities for any particular position could be reviewed by the servicing human resources office during reclassification.

"And that has, in fact, occurred," he said. "There are some cases where an employee is not happy with their classification, and we published on our website the process they had to go through to appeal a classification concern."

Communication with the workforce during the entire process has helped to ensure a smooth transition, the director said.

"We've been working very hard to make sure we keep everyone informed," he said. "As we make every step, we communicate to the workforce: 'This is our progress toward transition, this is when your group will transition, and this is the process we're going to go through.'"

Some employees, such as those who were first hired under NSPS, had never worked under the general schedule system, James said.

"We put 'GS 101,' a course, on our website," James said. "We recommended that employees who had never been on the general schedule, and employees who had been in the general schedule system, go review it. It was very informative, an easy read, and easily understandable."

James said the course was designed to emphasize to employees that while NSPS was a broad-pay-band system; the general schedule system has "discrete grades with very discrete [pay] steps."

"There is a difference between them—there's not a clean overlay between the two systems," he said.

Some employees were concerned that changing systems would mean a cut in pay or position, James said, but the law ensured no employee would face a pay decrease during the transition.

"The components made this a priority," he said. "They were very concerned about sending the proper message to the workforce, that ... they wanted to make sure the transition was smooth, that we met the mission, and that there was minimal impact to the employees. The components were on top of this the whole time."

James said 54,000 employees remain in NSPS, and about 6,000 of those will return to the general schedule system.

"We will continue to focus our attention on transitioning the remaining employees," James said. "We will meet the statutory date of Jan. 1, 2012, where all employees will be transitioned out of NSPS."

James said his work over the past year has been "a fascinating experience."

"We will have transitioned 228,000 employees out of NSPS to statutory non-NSPS performance management systems," he said. "That's more employees than are contained in any federal agency other than the Department of Veterans Affairs."

"Talking to the components and my staff and seeing the dedication it takes to do this has been very rewarding," James said.

### **Developmental Assignment Gives DLA Employee Fresh Focus**

*DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS (JAN. 24, 2011)*

*Dianne Ryder*

Few Defense Logistics Agency employees can boast a year-long experience working in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, but Traffic Management Specialist Kenneth Dodd can. Dodd works in DLA Logistics Operations and was accepted into the OSD Supply and Transportation Fellows Program in July 2009.

"The program provides potential leaders within an organization a ... macro view of the department and also provides you with insight about staff processes, coordination processes that happen at a very, very ... high level," he said.

The fellows program is geared to military officers at the O4 and O5 level and GS-13- to 14-level civilians, and allows participants to witness the interface among Office of the Secretary of Defense organizations, Congress, and the national security staff, Dodd said.

During his rotation, Dodd said, he worked with just one other Fellow from the Air Force.

"The workload didn't go away, and it was just the two of us. Between Lieutenant Colonel Kathy Travis and me, we essentially picked up the workload of what six people were doing for the course of that one year," he said. "I learned quite a bit while I was there [and] got to see a lot more than a normal Fellow would see."

Dodd's training opportunities over a 5-week period included the Logistics Management Institute Training Seminar, Georgetown Congressional Operations Seminar, DoD Center of Excellence in Logistics Program in Advanced Logistics and Technology, and the Joint Logistics Officer Course.

"The rest of it was the normal everyday challenges of staff work. But it was in a different environment, and you had a different hat on," he said.

Working at the transportation policy office allowed Dodd to quickly learn about Defense Department sealift policy. He was then able to help prepare the logistics and materiel readiness principal deputy assistant secretary of defense to successfully defend the policy during a meeting with Department of Transportation officials.

"I participated in working group meetings where I provided input for the development of a new Department of Defense

logistics strategic plan [and] completed numerous tasks dealing with mail support for DoD personnel overseas," Dodd said.

He said he also took the lead for a special project on "transportation item unique identifier" requirements and kept the project on schedule.

"While at supply chain integration, I managed and tracked the DoD issuances process," he said. "[I also] evaluated, coordinated, and supported the DoD Supply Chain Excellence Award, and led the planning and coordination of the 13th Annual DoD Packaging Award Ceremony."

Dodd's best memory during his rotation was coordinating on a memo that enabled civilian and military servicemembers to have free postal privileges, he said.

"Many of our troops around the globe, particularly in combat zones, have free mail privileges," he said. "They can mail packages [and letters] back to their family members. But members of the armed forces and DoD civilians were not receiving free mail privileges while deployed to the United Arab Emirates and Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan."

The U.S. Central Command chief of staff requested personnel in those regions be granted free mail privileges, and the request came through the OSD coordination process for the secretary of defense's approval, Dodd said.

"I was the OSD transportation policy action officer that staffed the request. ... I was part of the process," he said. "That was the highlight of my year there."

"So often in large bureaucracies, action officers do not see the benefit of their work. It was very humbling to think how my work had actually produced a tangible benefit for the men and women who wear the uniform, and our DoD civilians," he said.

Dodd highly recommends the program to DLA coworkers, but said he would caution supervisors to only send employees who are "motivated and willing to learn." Participants' mental approach is critical, he said.

"What I would recommend to any individual, whether they're going to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces or whether they're going to OSD Fellows, ... is to look at it as a valuable learning opportunity and to get as much out of it as they can and then bring those values back to DLA to improve the agency," he said.

As to his personal experience, Dodd said the networking opportunities with logistics professionals outside of DLA helped him better understand the agency's role within the Defense Department.

"It also taught me a lot about authorities, roles, and responsibilities of different organizations within the department, understanding what their core competencies are ... [and how they] mesh together to bring a unified departmental front," he said. "It was healthy to be away from DLA for a year because when you come back it gives you a fresh focus."

"The question you have to ask yourself ... is, where are these Fellows going to bring the most added value to the program? The obvious answer is they'll bring more added value if they get to sit in one seat for six months and ... sit in another seat for six months."

After completing the program, Dodd said, his management and communication skills improved and he was better prepared to resolve defense supply chain and transportation issues at a strategic level.

"It was a good year. ... I'm very grateful for it," he said. "[I] brought back an improved sense of speed and agility, which creates maneuverability for getting things done in a large organization."

### **Civilian Program Mentors Afghan Defense Counterparts**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (FEB. 7, 2011)*

*Jim Garamone*

WASHINGTON—There's more to building an army than training soldiers, and Defense Department civilians are stepping to the fore to help Afghan counterparts learn how to run a military establishment.

DoD established the Ministry of Defense Advisors Program in 2009 to address a basic issue NATO faces in Afghanistan: how to effect a smooth transition of security responsibility to Afghan security forces, said James A. Schear, deputy assistant secretary of defense for partnership strategy and stability operations.

"Training the Afghan army and police is part of the equation, but so is the encouragement and development of competent ministerial institutions to oversee the transition and sustain the force over time," Schear said in an interview.

Civilians bring expertise across a wide range of skill sets ranging from financial management to personnel policy to acquisition and logistics. These are skills that DoD civilians

can best teach to their Afghan counterparts, he said. The program is part of the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce initiative and is aimed at civilians in grades GS-13 and above.

The first group of DoD civilians deployed last year, drawn from the department's 700,000 civilian employees, Schear explained.

"It's a terrific talent pool to draw from," he said. "If you are an Afghan minister, you can look at them and say, 'These are people who bring talents to build my office, my staff, my department,'" he added.

A uniformed officer is an asset in Afghanistan, Schear noted, but a DoD civilian sends a message of commitment to Afghan leaders. "With a contractor, the question often becomes, 'Who are you working for, and how flexible are you?'" he said. "We think civilians are a very good fit."

A strong demand exists for the advisors, and they form an integral part of the NATO and U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan, wants the advisors to make up about a third of the personnel in the ministries in 2011. They constitute about 5 percent today.

If chosen, employees go through a 7-week training session in Washington and at Camp Atterbury, Ind. Schear said those chosen already have the technical expertise, and that the training helps them to build their mentoring skills and immerses them in Afghanistan's culture and history.

The training addresses hard problems, he added, such as corruption and the drug trade.

"It's not a flashy job," Schear said. "They have to blend in and work effectively behind the scenes and promote Afghan ownership of the result. You have to be practical and flexible, and you have to be in listening mode and to be very practical in your advice with the knowledge of what can be absorbed in an Afghan reality."

Once deployed, the advisors work with NATO Training Mission Afghanistan for a year and can extend for another year. A temporary backfill mechanism is in place so the volunteers' offices in the United States will release them to deploy. "We're going after high-quality people," Schear said.

The advisors—most with between 15 and 20 years of experience—can "reach back" to their organizations to get help, advice, or any resources the ministries may need, he added.

Schear emphasized that volunteers need to be flexible. "We've had people go in because of one skill set and find they end up doing something else," he said.

The program has applicability elsewhere, providing a capability Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates deems important.

"Right now it is mainly Afghanistan-focused," Schear said, "but Defense Secretary Gates has stressed the need for capacity building in a broader strategic context of working with partners in the developing world and regions that are susceptible to instability. Developing responsible, responsive defense ministries is key to that."

### **DLA Strives to Develop Workforce Through Career Mapping**

*DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY PRESS RELEASE (FEB. 16, 2011)*

*Sara Moore*

In keeping with the Workforce Development focus area in the 2011 Director's Guidance, the Defense Logistics Agency has launched a new initiative to help employees plan their careers and achieve their maximum potential.

DLA Training, part of DLA Human Resources, collaborated with representatives from across the agency to develop an enterprise approach called career mapping to assist employees in navigating their potential careers. Career mapping is a structured approach to career management designed to provide career roadmaps, from entry through executive levels. These roadmaps are designed to enhance personal and professional growth in support of the agency's effort to develop a highly effective and competent workforce, DLA Human Resources Director Brad Bunn said.

"DLA recognizes that a diverse workforce is vital to success and the importance of developing and leveraging the abilities and skills of its talented workforce," said Pam Latker, chief of career management at DLA Training. "Career mapping validates the agency's commitment to its employees' professional development and provides the employees with an opportunity to partner in their development"

As a result of the career mapping effort, DLA has developed two new tools for employees: the DLA Career Guide and the DLA Career Pyramid.

The DLA Career Guide is a foundational guide that describes career paths, competencies, and training and development activities to build and strengthen individual and organizational capabilities, Latker said.

The DLA Career Pyramid is a general career map that identifies DLA career fields and includes links to the specific career field pyramids, she said. The pyramid contains development levels and four focus areas: job functions, technical competencies, leadership competencies, and education and training.

These universal tools are posted on the DLA Human Resources website at: [www.hr.dla.mil/resources](http://www.hr.dla.mil/resources). The long-term goal is to develop a user-friendly, interactive career mapping development website, Latker said.

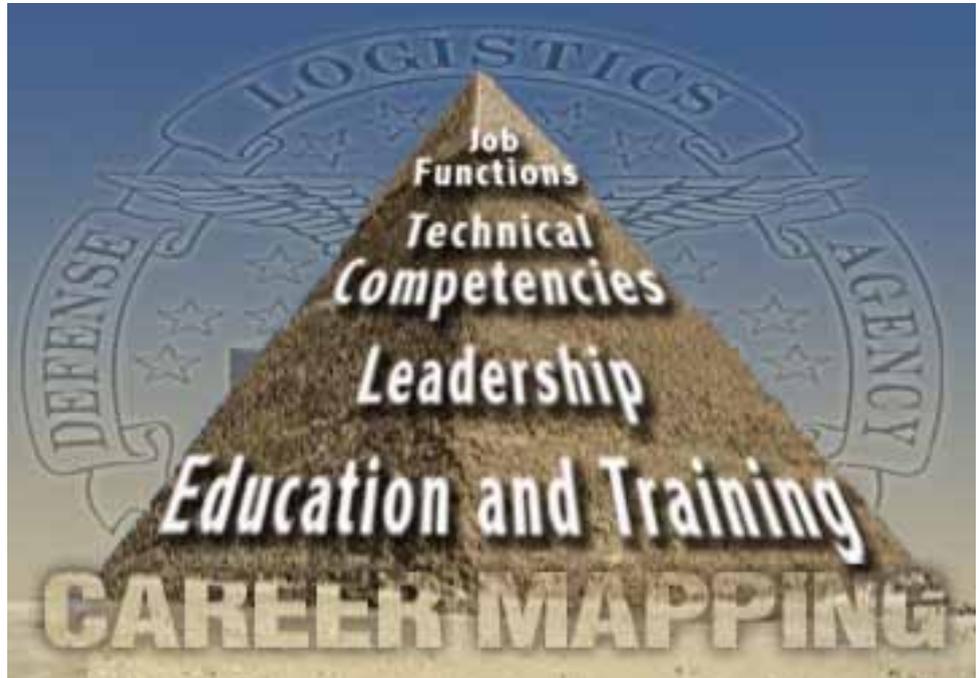
DLA Director Navy Vice Adm. Alan Thompson made career mapping a priority in his 2011 Director's Guidance, specifically the Workforce Development focus area.

According to the Director's Guidance, an initiative of this focus area is to "ensure civilian and military workforce capabilities match present and future mission requirements through DLA's Talent Management Initiative."

Career mapping is linked to many other workforce development efforts, including validating competencies, reinvigorating the leadership program, and formalizing rotational assignments, and will integrate information from these efforts, Latker said.

While the Career Guide and Career Pyramid are generalized and pertain to all DLA employees, DLA Training is now focusing on developing detailed career maps and pyramids for each career field, beginning with the agency's mission-critical occupations, Latker said.

DLA's mission-critical occupations include three categories: direct-support MCOs, which directly impact the agency's ability to deliver effective and efficient worldwide logistics support to customers; functional-support MCOs, which support and provide essential capabilities and functions to establish, sustain, operate, and maintain DLA's worldwide business operations; and general support MCOs, which pro-



The DLA Career Pyramid is a general career map that identifies DLA career fields and includes links to the specific career field pyramids.

Image courtesy DLA

vide enterprise support to DLA infrastructure, safety, and readiness.

To complement the DLA Career Guide and DLA Career Pyramid, DLA Human Resources will collaborate with functional community managers to develop career field-specific products for each MCO to assist employees and supervisors in planning career development activities, Latker said. These products are:

- Career Field Guide—This guide augments the DLA Career Guide and contains career field-specific information.
- Career Field Pyramid—This pyramid aligns with the DLA Career Pyramid and is designed to address career field-specific competencies, job functions, education and training requirements, and opportunities at each development level.
- Detailed Map of Development Levels—This document consolidates the information identified on all four sides of the Career Field Pyramid for each development level.
- Knowledge and Experience Checklists—This career field-specific list is a tool to review associated competencies and experiences relevant for each development level.

DLA Training partnered with DLA Acquisition to complete the first detailed products for the contracting career field. DLA Acquisition is planning to share its products, documents, and results with the DLA Contracting community, Latker said.

The DLA career mapping concept and initial products were well received; feedback was positive and beneficial," she said.

DLA Human Resources Director Brad Bunn said he hopes to have career mapping documents completed for several of DLA's mission-critical occupations.

"Although the Director's Guidance expected action is to develop career road maps for at least two MCOs, I'm confident we can surpass this goal based on our progress and support from the functional communities," Bunn said.

As DLA Human Resources continues to work with functional community managers in identified MCOs to map their career fields, FCMs will keep employees informed about what products are available and when, and employees should expect to see additional career mapping communications over the coming months, Latker said.

### **Civilian Employees Should Start Education Applications Early**

*AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, SERVICES AND MANPOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (MARCH 2, 2011)*

*Debbie Gildea*

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Hundreds of professional development opportunities are available annually for civilian employees. Many of those slots go unfilled, in part because eligible candidates wait until the last minute to prepare and staff their application packages.

For example, annually, 280 Civilian Acculturation and Leadership Training program positions, 100 Squadron Officer School slots, and 180 Air Command and Staff College Distance Learning Master's Program slots are available to civilians, said Loretta Brown, the civilian leadership development chief here.

Many people are under the impression that participating in the civilian developmental education, or CDE program is only for senior civilians, or that they will be forced to relocate if they participate. That is not true in most cases.

"There are opportunities for employees at every pay and leadership level, varying from the CALT program to in-residence Air War College," Brown said. "Only certain programs

commit the employee to continued service agreements and relocation. But those programs are primarily senior leadership programs."

The three civilian developmental education levels include tactical, operational, and strategic.

Tactical-level programs (new employee orientation and CALT) are primarily for new civilian employees, although civilians hired before New Employee Orientation (NEO) was implemented are encouraged to complete the seven-module online program. Major differences between NEO and CALT are that NEO is mandatory for all new civilian hires and must be completed within 90 days of accession, while CALT is optional, and only non-prior military employees are eligible.

Operational-level programs include Education with Industry, Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College Distance Learning Master's Program, and Intermediate Developmental Education Programs. Operational-level programs exist to educate and develop interested mid-career employees. Each program has individual eligibility requirements, but all are designed to grow future civilian leaders.

Finally, strategic-level options include senior developmental education programs, like Air War College, and strategic leadership education programs, such as the Executive Development Seminar. Strategic-level programs exist to prepare high-potential employees for increased responsibility and shared leadership. Again, eligibility requirements differ depending on the program selected, but a common denominator is that strategic-level programs are for GS-14 and -15 employees, or their equivalent.

Information on all CDE programs is available on the AFPC Force Development Web page. Type "civilian force development" in the search field, and then select the green updated civilian force development home page link.

Civilian employees who want to grow their careers have education opportunities at every level, said Brown. But to make sure they have every advantage, they need to get started on the application. The civilian developmental education call is open now with *applications due May 1*.

For more information, visit the Air Force personnel services website or call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102.

*Gildea is with Air Force Personnel, Services, and Manpower Public Affairs.*