

REPORT: Employee Recruitment and Service Recognition

September 30, 2009

Submitted by the EMAB Human Capital Subcommittee

Background:

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, the Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB) was tasked by Assistant Secretary Triay to continue identifying and sharing corporate experiences, strategies, and programs that are adaptable to EM's diversity and employee recruitment and retention initiatives. In order to pursue this charge, EMAB extended the operation of its Human Capital Subcommittee – consisting of Board members, Lessie Price, Jennifer Salisbury, A. James Barnes, and G. Brian Estes. These members participated in a conference call with the Director of the Office of Human Capital, Desi Crouther on August 4, 2009, to further discuss follow-up items from the Board's April 29, 2009, public meeting in Washington, D.C., and the status of EM's Human Capital initiatives.

Findings and Observations:

Recruiting new talent continues to be a major focus for the Office of Human Capital. In recent years, EM has increased its presence on college campuses and participated in numerous job fairs. The program is now working to be more strategic in terms of the recruitment opportunities and hopes to plan visits in relation to expressed mission-critical occupations. For example, the need for nuclear engineers will force EM to visit locations that will facilitate recruitment in that field.

In addition to recruiting new employees, EM is also working to retain its current workforce. Retention is largely based on whether employees feel that their service and contribution to the program is valued. Many EM Headquarters (HQ) employees have reached the GS 14-15 level and have been capped off as far as advancement other than to managerial Senior Executive Service positions. EM-HQ continues to recognize these employees through awards programs, cash bonuses, annual leave, and opportunities for detail assignments within EM. Additionally, employees are presented with awards correlating to years of service.

In FY 2006 EMAB's Human Capital Subcommittee presented Recommendation 2006-02, which stressed that efforts needed to be made to improve employee morale by changing the type of service award given to employees in recognition of their length of service and by collaborating with DOE corporate to redesign the award, making it both suitable and attractive, to male and female recipients. However, it appears that this recommendation was never fully implemented.

Furthermore, it has recently come to the attention of EMAB's Human Capital Subcommittee that there are significant discrepancies between the formal recognition provided to employees for their length of service at EM-HQ and throughout the complex.

Recommendations:

To further aid the Assistant Secretary in her efforts to improve employee morale and make EM an Employer of Choice, EMAB's Human Capital Subcommittee offers the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2009-19: EM should explore opportunities to coordinate employee recruitment efforts with other DOE program offices in order to leverage the Department's resources.

Coordinating with other DOE program offices in order to leverage the Department's existing recruitment resources will pay dividends for EM. In addition to potentially reducing costs and labor hours, joint recruitment and outreach efforts will help DOE build a more corporate, marketable brand at job fairs and on college campuses.

Recommendation 2009-20: EM should improve and standardize employee service recognition programs throughout EM Headquarters and the complex.

Suggestions for Implementation:

- Survey other federal agencies and the EM sites to obtain examples of current employee service recognition programs.
- Contact the Office of Personnel Management to ascertain what it believes to be examples of best practices and/or innovative approaches to employee recognition awards.
- Contact the National Academy of Public Administration and ask whether several of their Fellows who have an extensive background in federal human resource/human capital matters would be willing to consult with EM on ideas for enhancing the employee service recognition programs.