

CRITICALLY SKILLED PERSONNEL FOR MILITARY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Many jobs in military and public service require individuals with critical skills including medical expertise, proficiency in computer and spoken languages, engineering, and more niche skills such as welding. Federal agencies compete among themselves and with the private sector for critically skilled personnel and recruiting efforts within the federal government are fragmented across agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission proposes improved coordination and management for critically skilled personnel, strengthening educational pathways for individuals to acquire high-need skills, better personnel management to retain personnel, and emergency mechanisms to meet critical skill needs in a national mobilization.

- **Identify critical skills requirements and improve intragovernmental coordination.**
 - Establish and appropriate funding for a Council on Military, National, and Public Service to coordinate whole-of-government efforts to recruit and retain individuals with critical skills and cultivate pathways for Americans to develop these skills.
 - Require the Department of Defense to generate and maintain a list of the type and number of critically skilled personnel needed for national security purposes.
 - Create an internet-based service platform to provide a centralized resource for Americans to learn about and connect with military, national, and public service opportunities, including employment, dedicated service terms, availability for emergency or disaster response, and willingness to join the military during an emergency requiring national mobilization.
- **Create and improve education pipelines for public service personnel with critical skills.**
 - Establish a Federal Fellowship and Scholarship Center charged with enhancing programs to develop individuals with critical skills for Federal employment.
 - Create a Public Service Corps to fund scholarships for university students to pursue degrees in high-need fields in exchange for a commitment to work in the civil service.
 - Authorize the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to pilot new authorities to hire students and recent graduates with critical skills.



RECOMMENDATION SPOTLIGHT

- **Create and improve educational pathways for military personnel with critical skills.**
 - Authorize and appropriate funding for military departments to offer limited tuition grants for pre-service technical degrees, certificates, and certifications in exchange for an enlisted service commitment.
 - Authorize and appropriate funding for the Secretary of Defense to run a pilot program establishing a partnership with community colleges and vocational schools to provide degrees, certifications, and certificates through technical education programs.
- **Improve public service medical personnel management.**
 - Authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to issue regulations and guidance to implement a single personnel system to cover all Title 38 health care providers and health care support professionals.
 - Authorize the portability of health care licensure to all Federal employees, so long as the practice is within the scope of authorized Federal activities.
- **More effectively manage military personnel.**
 - Direct the Secretaries of each of the military departments to develop new personnel management structures to improve recruiting and retention for specific military occupational specialties.
 - Direct Federal agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense and the military departments, to leverage existing authorities to allow permeability between all components of government service, and between the government and the private sector.
 - Direct the Secretary of Defense to use existing authorities to establishing warrant officers as an optimal pathway for individuals transitioning in and out of service to retain service members uninterested in pursuing command leadership.
 - Direct the Secretary of Defense to establish permanent billets at the Defense Digital Service and similar entities instead of staffing through temporary duty assignments.
- **Develop a reserve capacity for high demand skills.**
 - Authorize an Individual Ready Reserve of non-prior service members with critical skills to be available to be activated in times of emergency.
 - Authorize and appropriate funds for a national roster of individuals with interest in serving during national emergencies. This would provide a scalable means for individuals to indicate their interest in military, national, or public service in emergencies and provide information on their skills and expertise.
 - Authorize and appropriate funds to create a Civilian Cybersecurity Reserve pilot program that permits agencies to call up cybersecurity experts to return to full-time civilian employment if their services are required to address an emergency.

