

USING
THE IPA MOBILITY ASSIGNMENT
AND OTHER STAFFING TOOLS

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backs of this nature will induce Federal managers to seek staffing alternatives. One of these alternatives is the IPA Mobility Assignment. I am concerned that the flexibility and simplicity of this program not be destroyed through overuse or abuse. Instead, I think the mobility assignment can be used creatively and imaginatively to solve the problems of increased scarcity of Federal personnel resources, while, at the same time, providing a benefit to the organization-temporarily relinquishing the IPA. I also believe there should be an increased use of the IPA in the Federal system as a career development alternative. Career Federal employees who would benefit from the exposure to working in a different environment could use the mobility assignment as a career development tool. But any organization, Federal or otherwise, can benefit from the exposure of its staff to experiences, jobs and responsibilities beyond the normal scope of the organization's operations.

Attracting talent which is also minority and/or female has the additional advantage of supporting affirmative action goals. While employing an IPA may not always count towards these goals, the mere presence of minorities/females in responsible positions supports affirmative action. The theory that increasing the population of a minority group(s) in an organization increases the familiarity and acceptance of the minority group is not a new idea. However, one woman recently received an award for developing new theory based on this idea.

Rosabeth Kanter explored the dynamics between men and women in a major U.S. corporation. In her book, Men and Women of the Corporation*, she found that with any token, there is a 'law of increasing returns': The fewer the number of tokens, the larger the share of awareness given to the tokens by the dominant group. In other words, the fewer the tokens, the more attention they get. But, Kanter also found that such visibility placed performance pressures on the tokens. Comparison of the tokens with the dominant group makes the differences between the two groups more noticeable. The result: the token is stereotyped, the die is cast, and the token never moves ahead! **

*Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Men and Women of the Corporation, Basic Books, New York, 1977.

**The concepts summarized here can be found between pages 210 and 213 in Kanter's book.

To reverse this situation so that minorities and women can be judged on a more rational basis, it is clear that more minorities and women must be present in the work situation at levels of significant responsibility, regardless of employment situation. Exposure is very important to behavior modification of both the dominant and subordinate groups. The IPA mobility assignment and similar staffing tools can be used in a strategy to increase minority/female representation at high staff positions, at least temporarily. Instead of relying solely on M/W coming up through the system, these personnel staffing tools can be used to broaden the variety for selection. In these high positions M/W can influence the dominant cultures, regardless if the M/W remain with the Federal Government. The benefit of using the management tools discussed in this paper should be pursued more actively.

THE IPA MOBILITY ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM

The Intent

Title IV of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 provides for the exchange of personnel between the Federal Government and State governments, local governments and institutions of higher education. In 1975, Indian tribal governments also became eligible. In 1978, a provision of the Civil Service Reform Act now permits non-profit organizations to be eligible under certain circumstances. The intent of the original Intergovernmental Personnel Act was to facilitate Federal-State-local cooperation through the sharing of personnel resources and ultimately to strengthen the workforces at all governmental levels. By bringing bright, motivated individuals to the Federal Government for a year of training and education to the Government, and, likewise, sending skilled Federal employees to other levels of government and academia, the Federal Government provides further avenues for intergovernmental cooperation, communication and liaison. In a way, the intent of the Mobility Assignment Program could be described as providing a missionary effort to spread the "gospel" of the Federal Government. When the IPA Act was passed in 1970, the Federal Government's skill in professional civil service prevailed over that of state and local governments. The "exchange" of talent favored the outflux of Federal expertise. (However, the Mobility Assignment Program is experiencing currently a heavier flow of assignments to the Federal Government.)

The Mobility Assignment Program was meant to be beneficial to both organizational participants (Federal and other eligible jurisdictions), in addition to the individual on IPA mobility assignment. The minimal paperwork required for assignment is testament to the intent that there should be minimal barriers to intergovernmental talent sharing. As seen by the Bureau of Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, Office of Personnel Management, "Individuals bring special talent to their temporary assignments,

and a broadened awareness of "the other side" back to their permanent positions."¹ The program was never intended to encourage widespread movements of people. The laws and procedures of the program are intended to benefit the individual on mobility assignment, so that s/he is not affected negatively by such an assignment. The individual must fully consent to the assignment and cannot lose any salary or benefits on the assignment. In short, "The purpose of this program is simply to make it feasible and convenient to temporarily assign skilled people between units of government when a real need exists and it serves sound public policy to do so."²

By agreeing to accept an individual on an IPA mobility assignment, the public manager gains, at minimal expense, an employee with already proven abilities and training. The manager also gains a fresh perspective from the individual on an IPA, which can be used creatively to attack new and old problems within the manager's organization.

Concurrently, the IPA receives a unique form of internship in the temporary transfer to an agency in another level of government. This individual can learn the inner workings of another governmental organization, while, at the same, time contribute to the productivity of that agency.

During the mobility assignment, the IPA's permanent employer, the lending organization, gains from the IPA's new knowledge and contacts. Upon return of the IPA, the lending organization gains a more roundly experienced employee.

The IPA mobility assignment is an innovative and flexible management tool which has been used successfully by many managers in highly diversified settings. For example, former Governor of Idaho, and current Secretary of the Interior, Cecil Andrus, referred to the IPA assignment as providing "high standards of excellence, professional competency, and integrity."³ In fact, one scholar encouraged the in-

¹U.S. Civil Service Commission, Bureau of Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, The Intergovernmental Personnel Act: Improving Public Service Delivery, January 1978, BIPP 150-80.

²_____, _____, Guidelines on Personnel Mobility for State Governments, Local Governments, Institutions of Higher Education, June 1971, p.1

³Op.cit., The Intergovernmental Personnel Act: Improving Public Service Delivery.

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offers a less conclusive, but helpful picture of the jurisdictional and geographical origins of the IPA. It also discusses the trends in assignments to and from the Federal Government.

Analysis of Jurisdictional and Geographical Participation

Participation of IPAs to and from the Federal Government:

The IPA Mobility Assignment program has been in operation since May, 1971. In 1975, for the first time, assignments to the Federal Government exceeded those from the Federal Government. Assignments to State/local/Indian tribal governments and educational institutions continue to decrease. This trend may indicate the increasing self-sufficiency and sophistication of these organizations. It may also indicate less incentives exist for a Federal employee to leave his/her job temporarily to assist another jurisdiction. The trend may also indicate both that it is easier for the Federal Government to compensate an IPA's expenses, and, conversely, that State/local/Indian tribal governments and educational institutions are less willing and/or capable of sharing or assuming the full costs of the Federal employee.

When the program first started in May, 1971, the participants were predominantly Federal employees on assignment to other jurisdictions. The current trend completely reverses the original trend. More assignments are made to the Federal Government than are made from it. During Fiscal Year 1972, 63% of the IPA mobility assignments were from the Federal Government. In Fiscal Year 1979, more than 77% of the assignments were to the Federal Government. There are several reasons for this but two major ones stand out: 1) the relatively high Federal pay scale makes it increasingly difficult for other IPA jurisdictions to reimburse the Federal Government for the services of one of its employees; 2) many Federal agencies have used the IPA mobility assignment to weed out unwanted employees. (The latter is such common practice, or at least accepted as common practice, that one supervisor told me he had suggested to two of his employees that they go on mobility assignment. His employees refused and told him they did not want an IPA assignment on their resumes or SF-171.)

While the original intent of the program was to exchange expertise, actual experience indicates that it is increasingly used as a management tool primarily for the Federal Government's benefit. The Federal Government uses it three ways:

- 1) To avoid personnel ceilings and contractual policies;
- 2) To borrow scarce expertise to meet one-time-only needs;
- 3) To rid an organization of an unwanted individual by "furloughing" him/her on an IPA.

IPAs Going to the Federal Government for Assignment:

	<u>FY 77</u>	<u>FY 79</u>	<u>Cumu- lative</u>
State Government employees	13.2%	15.6%	17%
Local Government employees	13.2	6.9	10
Indian tribal Government employees	.6	9.2	3
Higher education institutions	73.0	68.0	70
Other	---	.3	--
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100%

Participation of IPAs by Type of Jurisdiction:

(State/local/Indian tribal governments and education institutions)

Participation by State governments (both to and from) increased by almost three percent between Fiscal Years 1977 and 1979. Almost two percent of the increase occurred in the number of State employees going to the Federal Government during that same period. Representation from State governments has averaged seventeen percent of all IPAs going to the Federal Government during the life of the program.

Local government representation in the program has decreased from over ten percent in Fiscal Year 1977 to 5.3% in Fiscal Year 1979. Participation by and to local governments decreased from fifteen percent in FY 77 to less than ten percent in FY 79. However, this decrease occurred because fewer Federal employees went on assignments to local governments. Over the entire program's life, local government employees assigned to the Federal Government have represented ten percent of participation at the Federal level.

Participation from Indian tribal governments, while still relatively low, has increased tremendously since it began in FY 75. In Fiscal Year 1977, less than two percent of the IPAs were going to or coming from Indian tribal governments. In FY 79, that figure had increased to over eight percent. Likewise, IPAs going to a Federal agency, less than one percent were from an Indian tribal government in FY 77. In FY 79, representation had increased to over nine percent.

Although the cumulative average of State and local government employees on IPAs was 27% at the end of Fiscal Year 1977, this percentage decreased to less than 23% in FY 79. The great increase in participation has occurred in Indian tribal government employees coming to the Federal Government on IPA assignments.

Nevertheless, IPAs from academic institutions still dominate the Mobility Assignment program. They are 70% of all program participants since program inception. However, in the last few years the percentage of academic IPAs has decreased. In FY 77, 63% of Mobility Assignment Program participants were coming from or going to academic institutions. In FY 79 the percentage was 53%. In FY 77, 73% of IPAs assigned to the Federal Government came from academic institutions; in FY 79, 68% came from academia.

Although coverage under the IPA Mobility Assignment Program was intended to be broad enough to include any agency of State, local governments and any multi-state or intra-state authority, IPAs from academic institutions still dominate the program because of the nature of academic career development. The Federal Govern-

ment can provide a very fruitful year or two of academic research and study that could lead to publications so necessary to the academic career and upward mobility.

Initially, academic institution participation appears to have been of secondary importance in the IPA Act. In most States staff of public institutions of higher education are technically also government employees. Exclusion of private higher education institutions would have been infeasible for this program.

There are several reasons why the Mobility Assignment Program is dominated by exchanges with academic institutions:

- 1) the need for certain expertise can be found only at higher-educational institutions;
- 2) needs for expertise are usually structured in a special, one-time-only assignment, suitable to a temporary staffing need;
- 3) the academic year is more easily defined and finite than in most professions, making it easier to time a leave of absence for an IPA assignment;
- 4) academic career development requires new educational experiences on which to base research and writing activities;
- 5) the opportunity for an agency to obtain a "quality" IPA is more favorable if the IPA is from an academic institution;
- 6) the IPA from an academic institution is more accessible and visible in the academic setting, and, thus, easier to identify and tap. There exists no clearinghouse of potential IPAs, but there are programs sponsored by academic professional organizations which act as conduits for IPAs into the Federal Government. Examples: the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Participation of IPAs by Geographic Distribution:

Participation in the IPA Mobility Assignment Program from 1971 to 1979 included 2,497 Federal employees sent to other jurisdictions. During that same period, 4,349 persons were on IPAs to the Federal Government. All fifty states and U.S. territories, 350 local governments, 25 Indian tribal governments, and approximately 425 higher education institutions have participated in the program between 1971 and 1977. Over 45 Federal agencies have participated.⁶

Based on U.S. Civil Service Commission data from 1971 to 1977, more movement occurs between the more populous states. Generally, states like, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania have more IPAs going to the Federal Government than from it. These IPAs include not only State Government employees, but also employees of local governments and academic institutions. For example, of the IPAs going to and coming from Illinois, 88% have gone to the Federal Government. On the other hand, as might be expected, more Federal employees become IPAs in California than IPAs going from California to the Federal Government.⁷

These trends might occur because the more populous states attract more competent people who can develop various expertise sophisticated enough to be of value to the Federal Government. It might also be because the Federal Government slots are still allocated by state of origin, in which case, a citizen from a

⁶Ibid. . .

⁷Ibid.

more populous state may find it more difficult to find a job with the Federal Government. An IPA Mobility Assignment is one way of increasing the opportunity to enter the system.

As might be expected, Federal agency participation is dominated by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Between 1971 and 1979, HEW had a total of 1,448 IPAs going to and coming from the Department. The total for all agencies during that same period is 6,846. The Department of Agriculture also supports a significant number of IPAs. Between 1971 and 1979, there were 1,076 IPAs going to and coming from USDA. The Departments of Army, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency account for roughly 45% of all IPAs.

The IPA Agreement

To go on an IPA Mobility Assignment, an individual and the two organizations participating in the assignment must mutually agree to all terms and conditions of the assignment. The instrument through which this is accomplished is the IPA Agreement.

This is an important document to the IPA designee since it is the only one that contains information regarding his/her salary, benefits and responsibilities to both his/her lending and borrowing organizations during the IPA assignment. The IPA Agreement determines the IPA designee's future while on assignment, so it is the responsibility of the IPA designee to ensure that the stipulations within the Agreement are acceptable.

The IPA Agreement is an instrument of negotiation. It is to the advantage of the IPA designee to know the rights and en-

titlements of the IPA Mobility Assignment. The IPA designee is, in a sense, in a unique position, and must act as his/her own agent. Neither the lending, nor the borrowing organization is totally responsible for the IPA designee. It is up to the designee to determine his/her own future through the IPA Agreement.

For an IPA to be assigned to the Federal Government, there are two methods of assignment. An IPA can be on assignment or on detail. An IPA on assignment must have a GS-rating and is given a time-limited appointment to the Federal Government. S/he receives the minimum rate for the grade at which appointed; salaries and benefits are paid directly by the Federal Government. For most purposes, the IPA is considered to be a Federal employee and on leave without pay from his/her permanent organization. In addition, Federal leave policies are recognized.

The IPA on detail is still considered to be an employee of his/her permanent organization from which salaries, benefits and the paychecks still come. When on detail, the employee's leave policies emanate from the lending organization. If the IPA is on detail to a region with a higher cost of living, s/he is entitled to a supplemental or a per diem.

An IPA Mobility Assignment can be initiated by either the Federal Government, other eligible organizations or the individual interested in becoming an IPA. Generally, the Agreement is initiated by the host organization. Often an IPA on assignment is better for the individual than on detail. When on assignment, an IPA receives a GS-rating which may be useful in the future if a permanent Federal appointment is sought. Paychecks come directly from the Federal agency and not from the permanent organization. However, for the host organization, an IPA appointment is less complicated on a day-to-day basis since salary, benefits, including leave policies, are familiar to those administering the IPA. In addition, ambiguity about an IPA's role is diminished because a GS-rating is familiar to those who must work with the IPA.

An IPA on detail, on the other hand, is simpler to initiate because it does not count against personnel ceilings and does not require the additional processing of a GS-rating. The paycheck for an IPA on detail comes from the permanent organization and is usually supplemented with a supplemental or a per diem by the host organization. The permanent organization is reimbursed by the host organization on a billing basis. Judging from interviews with IPAs on assignment and detail, it is more difficult to ease into the system if on detail. This might occur because the detail is treated administratively differently: It is neither like an individual on contract nor like a Federal employee. The IPA on detail receives his/her salary in a different manner, and leave records are maintained separately. Even tracking down a phone number is more difficult if an IPA is on detail because an IPA on assignment is more likely to be listed in a phone directory. However, a detail may be the only mechanism available for some individuals, if the permanent organization has a term-limited leave without pay policy.

Two important factors must be considered in determining which method to use - personnel ceilings and budgetary constraints. IPA details do not count against ceilings. Although most IPA mobility assignments to the Federal Government are 100% federally-reimbursed, the level of reimbursement is subject to negotiation between the host and permanent organizations.

Because approval for a position and obtaining a GS-rating are two actions that must be accomplished before an IPA can go on assignment to the Federal Government, the host organization must make a more formal decision in regards to IPAs on assignment. More likely than not, an agency seeking an IPA on assignment regularly seeks IPAs and maintains "IPA slots". A detail, on the other hand, is more likely to be initiated by the IPA with an agency that normally does not have IPAs on staff or "IPA slots".

The IPA Agreement, in essence, acts as a contract. The terms and conditions are relatively flexible, and should be dependent on the needs of the two organizations and the individual. The length of a mobility assignment can vary from a few weeks to two years. Although an assignment can last for a maximum of four years, a renewal must be negotiated after two years. Federal employees are restricted to four years maximum

Generally, the lending organization puts few obligations on the IPA. Obligations range from reporting leave records to continuing to oversee graduate students in their studies. Some obligations are unstated. For example, some IPAs knew they would be expected to help obtain Federal grants on their return to their permanent organization. Obligations to the permanent organizations are so minimal that one IPA suggested that the permanent organization really should request more from the IPA.

The host organization, likewise, is uneven in defining the IPA's job assignment. While some organizations are more explicit than others, a host organization and the IPA should agree to the job assignment prior to executing the Agreement. A mutually agreeable assignment will avoid mismatching expertise and assignment, and therefore wasting the IPAs skilled talent. The Agreement, itself, does not have to be overly specific about responsibilities, as long as the two parties understand each other. One of the beauties of the IPA mobility assignment is its flexibility. Most individuals attracted to the IPA are self-reliant, self-motivated and enjoy the flexibility the assignment offers. Using the IPA Agreement to artificially restrict the flexibility of the program would be a mistake. Instead, the Agreement should operate as a vehicle through which a mutual understanding is obtained. Simply, the purpose of the Agreement is to:

- o Document terms and conditions that the IPA and his/her two organizations have agreed upon;
- o Document the employee's consent to the assignment;
- o Provide a record of the rights and responsibilities of each of the three parties to the Agreement.

OTHER STAFFING TOOLS

The IPA mobility assignment is only one staffing tool available to the Federal Government to increase pools of skilled talent, especially minority and female participation in the Federal workforce. The IPA and other tools can also be used by the minority or woman in his/her strategy for career development and upward mobility.

Another tool available is the President's Executive Exchange, which acts as the private industry counterpart of the IPA Mobility Assignment Program. Exchanges of executive talent occur between the Federal Government and private industry. Executives from private industry come to Washington after going through an intensive selection process. Care is taken to match the executive's expertise and desires with the needs of the Federal organization.

Public service employees on executive exchange are sent to companies across the Nation. The match between expertise and job assignment is also carefully negotiated by the Presidential Executive Exchange Commission. By exchanging public and private sector executives, both sectors gain a better understanding of the other's resources and limitations. The exchanges, incidentally, are not on a one-for-one basis.

While in Washington, the private industry executives receive intensive weekly, up-to-date briefings on Federal Government activities and issues. Several times throughout the year, the private and public sector executives meet for seminars and retreats to exchange experiences and ideas.

In the 1979 cadre of Exchange Executives, 12% of the public sector executives were minority and 23% were female. The private sector

executives were 10% female. There were no minorities. As a result of the Commission's concern about appropriate representation of minorities and women in the Exchange, the board of directors passed a resolution this year requiring minority/female participation to increase in coming years. This requisite increase in M/W participation will benefit those Federal organizations which opt to host an Exchange executive and staff high level positions with minorities and/or females. Also, as Lee M. Cassidy, Executive Director; President's Executive Exchange Commission, recently stated, "Participation in this program is one viable option for completion of the training requirements to be considered as a candidate for the Senior Executive Service."⁸

A new program for visiting administrators began in FY 80. In the Visiting Administrators Program, assistant deans of colleges and universities work with the Federal Government on a 90-day assignment. Their counterparts in the Federal Government, usually senior executives, can be assigned temporarily to a college or university. Because there has been little experience with this program, it is too early to project any trends in program usage.

The paperwork for obtaining a Visiting Administrator is even less cumbersome than for an IPA assignment. Under the program, the lending organization continues to pay the salary of the employee on loan. However, the host organization pays the employee's per diem while on assignment.

⁸Recreation Register, March 1980, The League of Federal Recreation Associations, Vol. 11, No. 5, p.1,15.

The program is coordinated by a non-governmental agency, the American Council of Education (ACE). ACE matches the clients with agencies or universities, provides once-a-week educational seminars and other coordinating activities.

The three-month term of the assignment is short, but a longer period would conflict with permanent job responsibilities. Because of the high level of expertise requisite in this program, it is easier to have high visibility as a visiting administrator, and thus have more of an impact as a minority and/or female.

Another program, the Presidential Management Intern Program, can be used to increase selection opportunities for potential Senior Executives. Administered by the Bureau of Intergovernmental Personnel Programs in the Office of Personnel Management, this program makes 250 internships available annually. Internships are for two years within the Executive Branch.

Begun in 1977 with an Executive Order from President Carter, the purpose of this program is to "attract to Federal service men and women of exceptional management potential who have received special training in planning and managing public programs and policies".⁹ Designed primarily for recipients of master's degrees in public management with limited or no managerial experience, nominations must be made by the student's dean or department chair. Nominations are screened by OPM and by regional screening panels. The majority of internships are located in Washington, D.C., although some are avail-

⁹Executive Order 12008, August 25, 1977.

able in other areas of the country. Uniquely, the program provides mentors for each intern. "Mentors are high level career management officials designated by the agencies to follow the intern's progress through the two-year internship and to provide advice and counsel for professional and personal growth."¹⁰

These are just three other staffing tools available. The interested executive or minority/female should review the litany of personnel program resources available to determine the most appropriate mechanism for developing staffing or career strategies.

¹⁰Federal Personnel Manual, Chapter 362, Presidential Management Intern Program, p. 362-3, September 29, 1978

STRATEGIES

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 can make a real difference in affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. For example, the Senior Executive Service places responsibility for affirmative action where it belongs - on the Senior Executive. With affirmative action and equal employment opportunity identified as a critical element for most SES members, a Senior Executive must be fully successful in completion of this element to be considered eligible for a bonus in the Department of Commerce. This position should influence the number of minorities and women at responsible levels in the Department. Supervisors of Senior Executives, under mounting pressure to increase the minority/women representation of the SES cadre, can turn to the IPA Mobility Assignment Program to provide a pool of talent.

Using the mobility assignment as a management tool in supplementing permanent staff and increasing the numbers of minorities/women in an organization requires effective and efficient planning. Strategies for 1) finding IPA talent and, specifically, minority/female talent; 2) justifying an IPA assignment; and 3) determining appropriate job assignments and responsibilities for the IPA must be developed to use the IPA as an effective management tool. The IPA can also be used by M/W SES'rs seeking organizational support to successfully complete their contracts.

The following section discusses these three steps in successfully strategizing.

A note of caution: The IPA should not and cannot be used to replace regular Federal civil service employees. Nor should it be used to escape affirmative action responsibility. It can be used to attract bright and capable minorities and women who cannot be found, or are not reachable in the regular civil service system. The beauty of the IPA system is its flexibility. Abuses to the system eventually will hinder this flexibility and make the system useless.

Finding IPA talent

Based on my own experience in tracking down IPAs to interview, I have drawn some tentative conclusions regarding the use of IPAs. Except for academic IPAs, it is not an easy task for a Federal agency to locate potential IPAs. No central clearinghouse exists either in Government or

otherwise. No agency clearinghouse, that I know of, exists either.

The Federal agency seeking an IPA must use other resources:

1. One of the reasons so many academics participate in this program is that there are professional associations for academics that provide IPA placement within the Federal Government. Regular fellowship programs are provided through these associations, which act as clearinghouses for interested academics and federal agencies. No counterpart program exists for State/local/Indian tribal government personnel interested in IPA assignments.

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) are two such professional associations. If an agency is seeking an academic IPA, it should contact associations such as these.

2. Another way of locating potential IPAs is to "scout" seminars and conferences. Several IPAs interviewed initially met their supervisors at seminars or conferences. The Federal supervisors were impressed with the individuals and later offered them IPAs.
3. To tap specifically minorities and women, there are, of course, associations and networks that can help Federal agencies locate skilled resources willing to take an IPA assignment. The American Society of Public Administrators, itself, has networks established that can be useful in locating potential IPAs. Additionally ASPA may be encouraged to establish a talent bank just for such a purpose.
4. Advertising in trade, association and professional journals, or Federal house organs receiving wide distribution is another form of outreach to potential IPAs.
5. Historically black colleges are another source of minority IPAs. The colleges are identifiable and limited in number. However, it may be difficult to entice these colleges to give up a valuable member of their faculty for one year or more. One supervisor in the Federal Government, who has supported four IPA mobility assignments for each of the last five years, has had difficulty in recruiting IPAs from historically black colleges. Last year, for example, he not only advertised in a national minority professional journal, but also sent letters to several of the black colleges. A few months later, he called several colleges and visited another. He was unsuccessful in recruiting minorities through these colleges. He thinks that most black colleges are so small and minimally financed that they cannot afford to lose a faculty member even temporarily. Currently, there is no evidence to support his conclusions, although the Office of Personnel Management is currently studying federal agencies' attempts to obtain IPAs from historically black colleges.

Over a year ago, President Carter urged Federal agencies to help strengthen the capabilities of historically black colleges. To support the President's policy, OPM urged Federal agencies to encourage IPA assignments with these colleges. The OPM study is

looking at the Federal Government's response to this directive. The study, once completed, will be helpful in identifying potential minority IPAs.

7. Another source of potential IPAs is program field contacts who are familiar with state, local and academic officials.
8. One other possibility is to organize IPAs in the Federal agency into a type of alumni association. Past IPAs can help identify future IPAs.

Justifying an IPA assignment

The Federal supervisor seeking an IPA for assignment to his/her staff may need to justify this staffing need. The following list of benefits to the Federal agency may be useful to the supervisor in designing the justification. (Another list of advantages can be found in the Appendix.)

1. An IPA can create an environment of "enlightenment" in an organization otherwise staffed by career civil servants. The IPA can introduce new techniques which can broaden the experiences and knowledge of the permanent staff.
2. The Assignment is temporary; no commitment of scarce personnel ceilings need be necessary. The temporary nature also insures that if an IPA is not appropriately assigned, the IPA can leave at the end of the Agreement, or, if all parties agree, the IPA can leave before the end of the Agreement.
3. The agency "borrowing" an IPA receives a new perspective on the IPA's permanent organization.
4. If a staff person with special qualifications is needed on a temporary, one-time-only basis, an IPA is better and easier to obtain than a contract for the same services.
5. It is possible to "hand-pick" IPAs. The IPA system is relatively unfettered with rules and regulations. The selection process is straightforward.
6. When an obscure area of expertise is needed, it is easier to attract temporary assignments than to attract permanent expertise. The IPA assignment is ideal for fulfilling this type of need.
7. Administratively, the IPA assignment has a more controllable budgetary impact and provides more accountability than, for example, a consulting contract, because the IPA is treated more as an employee than as a consultant.

8. When the IPA returns to his/her permanent organization, a ready-made contact in that organization is available to the organization which hosted the IPA.

Determining Appropriate Job Assignments

To avoid mismatching an IPA's talents with the job assignment, the Federal supervisor would be wise to prepare a description of the job assignment. It need not be as elaborate as a regular job description, but it should contain the key elements of what is to be accomplished by the IPA. After the job assignment description is prepared, the supervisor should begin to screen potential IPAs. Carefully matching skills with responsibilities will provide a mutually successful experience for both the IPA and the Federal agency.

Many positions in the Senior Executive Service and Merit Pay pool are supervisory. Because of the temporary nature of the IPA assignment, there is some cause for concern in placing an IPA in a supervisory position. While an IPA may be familiar with large organizations, the Federal Government remains unique, as are the skills needed for supervising in the Federal Government. In fact, each Federal agency is unique as a large organization. Working for an urban State government can provide a comparable experience. However, few local governments offer the broad and general approach to issues that occurs frequently at the Federal level. More importantly, local government employees, if familiar with the Federal system at all, are involved in implementation of Federal programs and regulations. Rarely, if ever does an employee of a local jurisdiction become involved in policymaking. A state government with a full-

time law-making body probably provides the most comparable experience to an employee going to work for the Federal Government. Few academics have the experience with a large governmental organization. Most do not have any bureaucratic experience of the magnitude of a large organization.

Familiarizing oneself with the Federal bureaucracy is indeed difficult, especially if there has been no previous, comparable experience. Trying to supervise permanent employees, while grappling with the Federal organizational maze can be personally overwhelming, as well as detrimental to the permanent staff. Nevertheless, there are instances when an IPA can function well as a supervisor. For an IPA to supervise, the difficulty of matching expertise with the assignment is compounded. The following criteria, developed from conversations with supervisors of IPAs and IPAs who were supervising, describes the circumstances under which an IPA can successfully supervise:

1. Comparable experience with organizations like the Federal Government is helpful. Large State government experience is the most comparable.
2. Previous experience supervising is also helpful. The basic tenets of supervising do not change from organization to organization, no matter how small or large.
3. Preferably, the IPA would be supervising a professional staff. Generally, this means fewer problems for the IPA. Otherwise, experience supervising union members would be advisable.
4. Supervising a special team with members from different agency organizations is an experience less subject to daily organizational strife, and therefore more conducive to supervision by an IPA.

CONCLUSION

The IPA Mobility Assignment is a management tool that can be used effectively in devising strategies effective in increasing minority/female participation in Federal middle and senior management. Clever use of this and other staffing tools should be encouraged, especially in times of personnel cutbacks. However, using these tools effectively does not mean Federal managers should abuse these uniquely flexible tools. The Office of Personnel Management and Federal agency personnel offices should establish more control over the use of these tools without altering their flexibility and effectiveness. Instead, these offices should establish guidelines that can be universally applied, yet easily adopted by each agency.

For the manager or minority/female professional seeking additional information on the IPA Mobility Assignment or other programs discussed in this paper, the following should be useful:

Information on the President's Executive Exchange Program can be obtained by writing:

The President's Executive Exchange Program
The White House
PO Box 14179
Washington, D.C. 20044

Information on the Visiting Administrator's Program can be obtained by writing:

Dr. John Bennett
American Council on Education
1 Dupont Circle
Washington, D.C. 20036

Information on the IPA Mobility Assignment Program and the Presidential Management Intern Program can both be obtained from the Office of Personnel Management.

APPENDIX

SURVEY OF IPAs

Methodology

To determine common characteristics of both IPAs and their assignments, and to discover the best use of the Assignment as a management tool, a survey was conducted earlier this year. A broad spectrum of IPA participants was sought. Some of the IPAs' supervisors were interviewed as well. Open-ended questions were asked to provide a free flow of information on those aspects of the IPA Mobility Assignment vehicle that would be either conducive or restrictive to a more structured use of the Mobility Assignment to attract more minorities and women to Senior Executive Service positions and to the Merit Selection pool.

The survey sample was selected informally. However, an attempt was made to select a sample that was proportionately based on past Federal agency participation in the IPA program. The number of participants selected from each agency depended on the proportion of participants that had been assigned to the Federal agency in Fiscal Year 1979. The number selected to be interviewed from each agency roughly conformed to four percent of the total number of IPA Mobility Assignments to the Federal Government in Fiscal Year 1979. Over thirty IPAs were interviewed, as well as half a dozen supervisors of IPAs.

Participants going from the Federal Government to another level of government or to an educational or non-profit institution were not surveyed. The focus of this survey was only on those coming to the Federal Government. Participants interviewed came not only from academia but also from State, local and Indian tribal governments. Because non-profit organizations only recently became eligible to participate in the program, none were interviewed. When it was possible to identify minority and/or female participants, they were interviewed. Finding M/W participants happened only by chance, since no clearing-house of IPAs exists. Data on minority/women IPAs are not collected in Federal agencies or in the Office of Personnel Management.

Attempts were made to obtain a fair cross-distribution of the IPAs based on their original jurisdictions. IPAs from State, local,

Indian tribal governments and academic institutions were surveyed. Several IPA supervisors were interviewed, including one from an organization lending an IPA. Generally, these supervisors were selected based on interviews with the IPAs they supervised: If an IPA expressed satisfaction with his/her assignment and no problems with processing the IPA Agreement, the supervisor was interviewed.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE IPA MOBILITY ASSIGNMENT,
As Expressed by Those Interviewed

There are many advantages to an IPA Mobility Assignment. There are, of course, at least as many advantages as there are individuals on assignment. Each assignment and IPA in that assignment are unique. Benefits and disadvantages, likewise, differ. There are some advantages, however, that were commonly found. The following is a list of advantages that were shared by IPAs surveyed:

1. To many of those on an IPA Mobility Assignment to the Federal Government, learning how the central governmental process actually works is of the greatest value. In their permanent organizations, some IPAs had the responsibility for implementing federal directives and requirements. Working for the Federal Government in a central organizational unit provides these IPAs with an insight to the reasons behind Federal regulations, directives, policies, et cetera.

One veteran IPA, who is chair of his department at the University of Hawaii, noted that "the programming process in Washington, D.C. is more target-oriented and more sophisticated than in the University." He intends to take back this knowledge to his University.

2. For many IPAs, a change in pace and type of work is a welcomed benefit of the assignment. Specifically, some academics find it is a chance to concentrate on one research project and to focus their research more narrowly. Others find the Assignment permits flexibility and independence in work assignments.
3. Many of the IPAs surveyed think of the Assignment as an opportunity to grow professionally while also providing a service to the Federal Government. The Assignment permits them to supplement and broaden their experiences.
4. For those who intended to look for a permanent Federal job while on the Assignment, the IPA permits a no-risk trial period with the Federal Government. Like trying on a new outfit before plunging into a major financial commitment, these IPAs are using the Assignment to test the waters and to determine if working for the Government suits them.
5. For others, the IPA is a chance to "cross-fertilize" experiences and perspectives. Both the Government and the individual on IPA benefit from exposure to different approaches.
6. For some, the IPA provides an opportunity to apply theory and to gain practical experience in his/her field.

7. Many IPAs were intrigued by the increased access to knowledge and people available in the Federal Government, particularly in Washington, D.C. Exposure to professionals in their fields and an opportunity to work with many bright, gifted people and organizations in the IPA's field were two advantages mentioned over and over again by IPAs surveyed.
8. One IPA, a full professor who wanted a "bureaucratic experience", noted that the Federal Government is the only organization that could afford him.

Advantages to the Host organization:

1. Several IPAs and supervisors noted that, in general, IPAs are above average in talent and intelligence, are self-reliant and self-motivated. IPAs also bring fresh ideas to the Federal Government.
2. Several supervisors, with an eye for potential employees, noted that the Assignment program permitted them to review the IPA's work over a period of time without any long-term commitment to the IPA.
3. A supervisor gains experienced people who are capable of "co-mingling" and dealing effectively with people. According to one supervisor, "little time is needed to acclimatize the IPA to procedures."
4. An IPA can fill a staffing need quickly because the paperwork process is minimal, personnel ceilings are not necessarily a barrier, and, as already mentioned, little time is needed for the IPA to become familiar with new procedures and work environ.

As with the preceding list of Advantages, there are disadvantages unique to each individual Mobility Assignment. The following are disadvantages shared by IPAs interviewed:

1. Although an IPA is probably more self-reliant than is common as a whole, mismatching an IPA's expertise with the job assignment occurs too frequently, judging from those interviewed. Mismatched IPAs complained of unused potential, frustration on the job, and feeling unuseful. While some extra self-reliant individuals were able to overcome these initial frustrations, mismatching is a physical as well as mental strain on both the individual and the organization. It should be avoided, when at all possible.

2. Many of the IPAs interviewed complained of the slow processing of their IPA Agreements. This can be attributed partially to the inexperience of Federal employees in processing Agreements. Additionally, agency personnel lack sufficient guidelines, and/or staff need training in processing this type of personnel transaction.
3. Familial adjustments were also a cause of discontentment. Only a few IPAs with families remained separated during the mobility assignment. These separations were noted as a disadvantage, but not a reflection on the IPA system. However, for those coming to Washington, D.C. or a region with a higher cost of living, the financial burden of bringing a family along was not necessarily compensated for by the higher federal salary or per diem.
4. Some IPAs experienced difficulty adjusting and being accepted in their new temporary work environ. Especially for those on detail, there was a perceived tendency for permanent employees to treat the IPAs as other than regular employees. While there is nothing wrong with this type of situation, the IPA is at a disadvantage if the job assignment requires working with the organization. As one IPA noted, it takes longer to "crack" an organization when coming from the outside. There is always a "time-consuming learning curve" that is to be expected. Some IPAs felt that this time "wasted" could be avoided or diminished if the host organization took more care to make good assignments that were appropriate to the individual's talents and the function of the agency.

For many academics there is an initial adjustment to the new work routine which usually is five days a week, eight hours a day and in a regular office setting. Many academics are accustomed to establishing their own work hours outside the classroom, with many preferring to work at home.

5. Most IPAs who intended on returning to their permanent organization found some disadvantage to leaving their regular work for a lengthy period of time. Academics found that their departments usually suffered from project stagnation, or at least from a slowdown in project progress. Generally, the smaller the IPA's permanent organization, the more difficult it is to find a temporary replacement. Some IPAs from local governments knew their agencies had not found any replacements. Some, particularly academics, were forced to balance their responsibilities with both their permanent and temporary organizations while on Assignment.

Disadvantages voiced by IPA supervisors were few because only supervisors with experience with the program were interviewed. One IPA supervisor in charge of a program evaluation office did discuss one trus-

tration. Because of the nature of the work and the preponderance of academics on assignment to the Federal Government, many IPAs are found in program evaluation shops. The relatively long-term projects common to these offices are ideal for academics to provide concentrated expertise. The supervisor was concerned that some evaluations cannot be started, or if started, cannot be completed by the same IPA because the IPA Mobility Assignment is shorter than the project duration.

Generally, the mobility assignment offers the individual and the IPA's two organizations far more advantages and opportunities than disadvantages. The lending organization is more at a disadvantage than either the individual or the borrowing organization. The permanent organization must contend with finding a temporary replacement for the employee on assignment. In addition, if the lending agency is not an academic institution, there is a good chance that it will lose the employee after completion of the assignment. Even if the employee does return, readjustment to the same job or restructuring the old job to better suit the returning IPA's new talents initially may pose problems to the lending organization.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Those interviewed were asked to suggest improvements to the IPA Mobility Assignment Program. Although several were content with the program as is, most of those surveyed had some suggestions. All those interviewed were aware of the value of keeping the program flexible. The following suggestions were offered in keeping with that understanding:

1. Most of the IPAs interviewed suggested that the paperwork process be made more efficient at the Federal level. Training personnel, providing agency guidelines and generally increasing the knowledge of the program would contribute to increased program efficiency.
2. Many thought that there should be increased familiarity with the program among the Federal Government, other levels of government, and academic institutions.
3. More care should be taken to match job responsibilities and assignments with the expertise of the IPA. Federal agencies should be more selective in screening IPAs. Selection should be based on the IPA's ability to benefit the organization in performing its formal mission.

This improvement may be initially more difficult to systematically implement for two reasons: 1) There exists no systematic process for selection. There is no Federal clearinghouse for potential IPAs to submit their names for consideration or for an agency to pull out potential names; 2) With increasing pressure to lower personnel ceilings, agencies will be seeking alternative strategies to staffing their organizations. At least initially, agencies suddenly forced into personnel shortages will react by trying to maintain personnel levels. Obtaining IPAs on detail is a quick, short-term solution to sudden, forced lowering of personnel ceilings.

With a little planning and commitment to find IPA expertise well-suited to the agency, the IPA assignment can be far more rewarding for the Federal agency and for the individual. Establishing regular "IPA slots" and/or budget set-asides to fund IPAs would ensure better planning and commitment to an effective IPA assignment.

4. Because the IPA's time is so short, some attempt could be made to ease the IPA into the Governmental system without cultural shock. An orientation program developed and sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management or the host agency is one way of addressing the problem.

Participation
in the
IPA Mobility Assignment Program
by
Federal Agency

<u>Federal Agency</u>	<u>FYs 71-79 Cumulative</u>	<u>FY 77</u>	<u>FY 79</u>
HEW	1448	279	233
USDA	1076	162	217
EPA	561	64	98
Army	535	128	77
Labor	534	50	63
HUD	490	34	50
Commerce	384	44	73
Interior	320	49	54
NSF	201	33	15
OPM	170		19
NASA	163	27	35
DOT	121		33
Navy	116		21
AID	90		1
Air Force	82		23
Justice	56		4
Treasury	43		6
CSA	39		3
Other	<u>427</u>	<u> </u>	<u>89</u>
Total	6,846	1,048	1,113
To Federal Agencies	4,349	803	858

Sources: Personnel Mobility September 1979, OPM, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs (a monthly cumulative report); The IPA Intergovernmental Assignment Program, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, April 1976, Rev: Dec. 1977, p. 15.

PARTICIPATION IN THE IPA MOBILITY ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM BY JURISDICTION

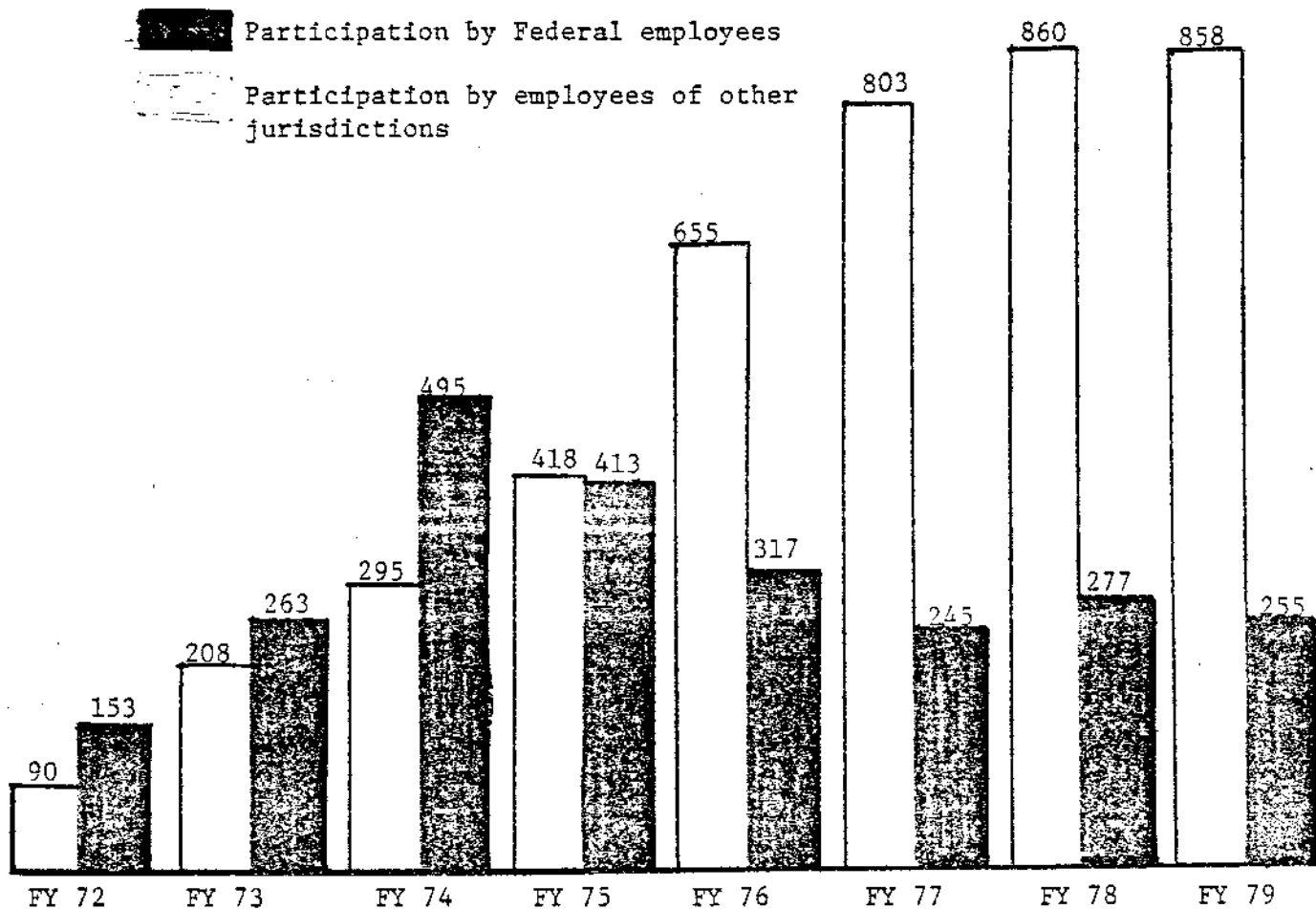
	Fiscal Year:								Cumulative	Cumulative
	<u>72</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>75*</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>78**</u>	<u>79</u>	FYs 71-79	FYs 71-77
IPA Mobility Assignments:										
<u>To the Federal Government</u>										
From States						106	117	134	736	485
Local Gov'ts						106	148	59	460	263
Indian Tribal Gov'ts *						5	24	79	111	8
Educational Institutions						586	571	584	3040	1885
Other **						<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	90	208	295	418	655	803	860	858	4349	2641
<u>From the Federal Government</u>										
To States						104	92	118	1104	904
Local Gov'ts						51	82	50	756	614
Indian Tribal Gov'ts*						15	10	11	66	45
Educational Institutions						75	93	69	564	402
Other **						<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>N/A</u>
	153	263	495	413	317	245	277	255	2497	1965
TOTAL	243	471	790	831	972	1048	1137	1113	6846	4606

* PL 93-638 made Indian tribal governments eligible to participate.

** The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 made non-profit organizations eligible under certain circumstances.

Sources: Personnel Mobility September 1979, OPM, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs (a monthly report); The IPA Intergovernmental Assignment Program, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, April 1976, Rev. Dec. 1977, pp 3,14.

PARTICIPATION IN THE IPA MOBILITY PROGRAM:
To and From the Federal Government



Sources: U.S. Civil Service Commission, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, The IPA Intergovernmental Assignment Program, April 1976, Rev: Dec. 1977, BIPP 152-64, p. 7; and Office of Personnel Management, Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, Personnel Mobility September 1979 (a cumulative monthly report).