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State Administration Staffing — Better Information Needed to Objectively Assess Possible Savings Opportunities, 2008

Maine State Legislature

Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability

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Fiscal Opportunity Study

FINAL REPORT

State Administration Staffing — Better Information Needed to Objectively Assess Possible Savings Opportunities

Report No. SR-SAS-07

a report to the
Government Oversight Committee
from the
Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability
of the Maine State Legislature

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OPEGA is an independent staff unit overseen by the bipartisan joint legislative Government Oversight Committee (GOC). OPEGA's reviews are performed at the direction of the GOC. Independence, sufficient resources and the authorities granted to OPEGA and the GOC by the enacting statute are critical to OPEGA's ability to fully evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Maine government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Administration Staffing – Better Information Needed to Objectively Assess Possible Savings Opportunities

Introduction

The Maine Legislature's Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) has completed a fiscal opportunity analysis of State administrative staffing. OPEGA conducted this study at the direction of the joint legislative Government Oversight Committee, in accordance with 3 MRSA §991-997.

The study focused primarily on potential opportunities to reduce administrative costs in State government related to upper level administration and organizational structure.

The GOC included this study in OPEGA's biennial work plan as part of a broader effort to identify opportunities for improving the State's financial situation. The study focused primarily on potential opportunities to reduce administrative costs in State government related to upper level administration and organizational structure.

OPEGA used the term "upper level administration" as a means to specify the group of positions considered to be within the study's scope. This group was meant to include executive level positions and all other positions that primarily perform work supporting executive level functions. This definition differs from the way State positions are currently categorized, classified and perceived by the Administration. These differences impacted our ability to determine, within the timeframe for this study, which specific State positions truly met our criteria for "upper level administration". We did, however, perform analyses on a larger group of positions that includes those we had hoped to focus on. The results are discussed in the Detailed Analysis section of the Full Report and were used in developing our recommendations.

OPEGA compiled and analyzed personnel data from the State's data warehouse and reviewed departmental organizational charts. We researched similar administrative streamlining efforts by other states and municipalities, as well as organizational theory regarding ratios of management to staff and organizational layers in public and private organizations. We also gathered information about how positions are established in Maine, as well as the benefits provided to certain categories of positions.

Summary

We were unable to determine whether real cost savings opportunities exist within the timeframe for this study.

OPEGA was unable to determine whether there are real opportunities for cost savings associated with upper level administration and organizational structure in the State due to the lack of a meaningful foundation on which to complete an objective study. For example, standardized, consistent organizational charts that adequately delineate organizational structure based on reporting relationships or functions do not exist for all departments. OPEGA believes, however, that it would be worthwhile to continue efforts to seek potential savings in State administration staffing. Our suggested actions would place the State in a better position to make reasoned decisions that may produce sustainable savings in future biennia.

Recommendations

We recommend the State continue with a comprehensive, longer-term approach to evaluating the State's current organizational structure and resources devoted to administration.

OPEGA generally recommends taking a comprehensive, longer-term approach to evaluating the State's current organizational structure and the resources devoted to administration. Such an approach does not provide short-term savings through immediate elimination of positions. However, we believe it is more likely to produce sustainable reductions in administrative costs, where appropriate, while still maintaining or enhancing the effectiveness of important government functions and programs. To facilitate such efforts, OPEGA suggests the Legislature consider:

To facilitate these efforts, the Legislature should consider requiring standardized organizational charts for all departments; establish a way to monitor position changes over time; and direct a market study of compensation packages for upper level positions.

A. Requiring all departments to biennially submit uniform, accurate organizational charts depicting reporting relationships for all positions and functions. The Executive and Legislative Branches could use these charts as one tool to assist with sound organizational analysis that focuses on aligning structures, systems and processes to achieve strategic objectives.

B. Establishing a mechanism for more comprehensively monitoring department and State-wide trends or patterns in position changes over time, and whether the cumulative effects of individual position changes are as expected given the changing nature of work and past restructuring efforts.

C. Directing the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to conduct a market study of total compensation packages (salary and benefits) for the types of positions included in Administrative Units H, M, O, X, Y and Z. The results would be beneficial in identifying whether adjustments to current compensation packages are warranted to increase success in recruitment and retention or reduce personnel-related costs.

FULL REPORT

State Administration Staffing – Better Information Needed to Objectively Assess Possible Savings Opportunities

Introduction

The Maine Legislature's Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) has completed a fiscal opportunity analysis of State administrative staffing. OPEGA conducted this study at the direction of the joint legislative Government Oversight Committee, in accordance with 3 MRSA §991-997.

In October 2006, a report by the Brookings Institution, *Charting Maine's Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places,* called attention to Maine's relatively high expenditures, as compared to national averages, for a number of state-level administrative functions. This added to an existing general perception that State government is in need of streamlining because it is top heavy organizationally with redundant functions and positions.

Over the course of the first regular session of the 123rd Legislature, several bills emerged calling for reviews of administrative positions. Discussions surrounding those bills emphasized that legislators were most interested in appointed, confidential, or policy-influencing positions, including those filling public relations and legislative liaison functions. Legislators were also interested in exploring whether administrative costs related to those positions could be reduced through restructuring or reorganization of government functions.

This study focused primarily on potential opportunities to reduce administrative costs in State government related to upper level administration and organizational structure.

As a result, the GOC included this study in OPEGA's biennial work plan as part of a broader effort to identify opportunities for improving the State's financial situation. The GOC further directed OPEGA to focus primarily on potential opportunities to reduce administrative costs related to "upper level administration" and organizational structure.

OPEGA used the term "upper level administration" as a means to specify the particular strata of State government, and related group of positions, considered to be within the study's scope. This group was meant to include executive level positions and all other positions that primarily perform work supporting executive level functions. This definition differs from the way State positions are currently categorized, classified and perceived by the Administration. As described in the

Methods and Scope section of this report, these differences impacted our ability to determine, within the timeframe for this study, which specific State positions truly met our criteria for "upper level administration". We did, however, analyze a larger group of positions that includes those we had hoped to focus on. The results are discussed in the Detailed Analysis section of this report and were used in developing our recommendations.

Concurrent with the preliminary phase of our review, the legislative Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs (AFA) was undertaking the Streamlining Initiative. As part of this initiative, AFA was tasked with conducting an evaluation similar to that of our study. OPEGA sought to assist AFA with its effort by sharing the results of preliminary analyses performed and keeping AFA apprised of the status of the study. In AFA's final report on the Streamlining Initiative, the Committee states its intent to review the final results of this study and to include any recommendations developed in response in the next budget bill following the release of this final report.

Methods and Scope

OPEGA researched similar administrative streamlining efforts by other states and municipalities, as well as organizational theory regarding ratios of management to staff and organizational layers in public and private organizations.

We assessed whether there had been position growth over the past 10 years in certain Administrative Units by comparing the number and types of positions in 1997, 2002 and 2007.

The scope of OPEGA's study included all Executive Branch agencies, the Constitutional Offices and selected Commissions or special agencies with State employees. Our work included:

- analyzing data from the State's data warehouse for positions receiving pay in fiscal years 1997, 2002, 2007;
- understanding processes used to create, eliminate, and reclassify positions;
- interviewing staff from the Bureau of Human Resources and Office of Employee Relations;
- reviewing executive branch organizational charts submitted by departments and agencies; and
- researching various approaches to streamlining or downsizing, as well as accepted theory or benchmarks on number of organizational layers and management to staff ratios for public and private organizations.

In our preliminary analytical work, we compared the number and types of positions in 1997, 2002 and 2007 to assess whether there had been position growth in Administrative Units[1] H, M, O, Y, Z, as well as Unit X at salary grade 28 and above over the past 10 years. We also developed and compared the percentages and ratios of this group of positions to all other positions for those years.

[1] See Table 1 on page 6 for a description of the Administrative Units.

OPEGA selected this particular group of positions (the subset) for analysis in order to capture the confidential, appointed, or policy-influencing positions of most interest to legislators. We selected salary grade 28[2] as a cutoff for the positions to be included from Administrative Unit X in an attempt to exclude as many positions as possible that are really professional or technical rather than administrative in nature. We were also able to exclude some additional professional positions at salary grade 28 and above in a few organizational units when historical job working titles were available. Despite these steps, we acknowledge that the subset of positions we analyzed still includes positions more accurately described as professional/technical rather than managerial or policy-influencing.

OPEGA attempted to gather additional position-specific data to further limit the dataset to those positions which represented "upper level administration" [3] and to better understand the functions performed by employees in those positions. We developed a survey tool and piloted it with an agency that would likely have the best access to position records. During the pilot, it became apparent that the effort to collect consistent, credible and useful information on specific positions would take longer and be more resource intensive than anticipated. OPEGA ultimately determined that proceeding with this data collection effort would not be cost-beneficial at this time. In addition, our research indicated that other approaches to reducing administrative staffing costs may produce more valuable results than focusing on specific existing positions or categories of positions.

Background

Position Categories and Classifications

The State categorizes positions by Administrative Unit based on the nature of work performed and inclusion in various bargaining units, as listed in Table 1. Non-union positions include those in Administrative Units H, M, O, X, Y and Z. Most positions that might meet our definition of upper level administration fall within these units.

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[2] The annual salary range for Pay Grade 28 in Administrative Unit X starts at $42,869.
[3] We defined upper level administration as executive level positions and all other positions that primarily perform work supporting executive level functions

Table 1. Executive Branch Administrative Unit Descriptions

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT	DESCRIPTION
A – Administrative Services	Employees in clerical and record maintaining processes, inspectors, investigators, examiners.
B – Professional/Technical Services	Employees performing professional, analytical, scientific or technical functions requiring specialized or professional training or licensing, and those engaged in planning and control of management programs.
C – Institutional Services	Employees providing direct care, paramedical, recreational and related support services for persons confined to institutions.
D – Supervisory Services	Employees whose primary function is performance of supervisory duties.
E – Operation/Maintenance	Employees engaged in craft or unskilled work in construction, maintenance or repairing and servicing or operating equipment and vehicles.
F – Law Enforcement	Employees engaged in law enforcement activities and providing services for public safety and protection.
G – State Police	Employees in State Police Trooper job series.
H – Title V Confidential	Employees in the major policy-influencing positions listed in Civil Service Law, Title 5, Chapter 71, except those in Administrative Unit Y and O.
M - Special Assistant to the Governor	Salary is set by Governor and employee serves in a position as Special Assistant to the Governor.
O – Salary Set by Statute	Includes the Constitutional Officers, elected Officials, and other major policy-making administrative positions.
X – Confidential	Management and support employees involved in administering labor agreements, engaged in the development and administration of management policies and procedures, or who exercise independent judgment in committing State resources, but are not deemed by law to be major policy influencing.
Y – Financial Order Required	Employees in positions with salary levels set by the Governor, including Department Commissioners, Directors and other high level professional and technical positions.
Z – Ineligible for Bargaining Unit	Employees in positions ineligible to belong in a collective bargaining unit or not elsewhere assigned, includes Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Secretary of State.

Most positions have both a job classification and a working title. Positions are also placed in Administrative Units based on the job classification and nature of work performed.

Positions are placed within Administrative Units based on their job classifications. The State has a mix of job classifications. Some are very general and cover a wide variety of positions. For example, Budget Analysts, Special Project Coordinators and Information Technology Specialists are often in the Public Service Coordinator classifications. Other job classifications better reflect, or are exactly the same as, the working titles associated with individual positions. Most State positions have working titles that are usually more indicative of roles filled or the work performed by employees in those positions. Table 2 illustrates some combinations of job classifications and working titles for existing State positions in Administrative Unit X.

Table 2. Job Classifications and Working Titles for Select Administrative Unit X Positions

JOB CLASSIFICATION	WORKING TITLE
Public Service Coordinator I	Director Special Projects
Public Service Coordinator I	Financial Analyst
Public Service Coordinator I	Staff Attorney
Staff Attorney	Staff Attorney
Public Service Coordinator II	Assistant to the Commissioner
Public Service Coordinator II	Director Division Policy & Programs
Public Service Coordinator II	Info Technology Management Analyst
Info Technology Management Analyst	Info Technology Management Analyst
Public Service Manager I	Director Division Licensing & Regulation
Director of Special Projects	Director of Special Projects
Public Service Manager I	Personnel Manager
Public Service Manager II	Director Audits
Public Service Manager II	Research Assistant
Public Service Manager II	Civil Engineer IV
Civil Engineer IV	Civil Engineer IV
Public Service Manager III	Director Division Licensing & Certification
Public Service Manager III	Service Center Director
Public Service Manager III	Assistant Director Bureau of Planning
Public Service Executive I	Director Division of Vehicle Services
Public Service Executive I	Director Audits
Public Service Executive II	Environmental Services Director
Public Service Executive III	Maine Quality Forum Director

Position Changes

Organizations need flexibility to change the number and types of positions due to the evolving nature of work and changing demands by clients and customers.

The number of State positions in each job classification and Administrative Unit fluctuates over time, driven by the nature and amount of work, as well as reorganization efforts within or among agencies. Generally speaking, organizations need to be able to make changes to numbers and types of positions in a timely manner to respond to the evolving nature of work and changing demands by clients and customers. The State has processes in place that are meant to balance this need for flexibility with necessary controls.

The creation or elimination of appointed positions is accomplished through specific legislative action. For all other positions, management typically initiates the creation or elimination by including specific position changes within the budget proposals brought before the Legislature. The Bureau of Human Resources

(BHR)[4] determines the job classifications new positions will be assigned to. The Legislature authorizes these position changes through the budget process.

New positions or new job classifications are also reviewed by the Office of Employee Relations (OER). The OER assigns them to the appropriate bargaining unit or designates them as non-union per the State Employee Labor Relations Act and the Maine Labor Relations Board criteria.

New positions and proposed reclassifications requiring funding changes go before the Legislature for approval with the budgets for individual departments. Reclassifications that can be self-funded do not require specific legislative approval.

Existing positions can be reclassified to reflect changes in job responsibilities. Positions may be moved into a classification already existing in the State's system or into a newly established classification. Depending upon the classification, the position may also end up in a different Administrative Unit. Positions within bargaining units may be reclassified as non-union if the functions and responsibilities of the position have changed and would be more appropriately included in a non-union classification and Administrative Unit.

Reclassifications may be initiated by management or employees, but agency management is always aware of the proposed change. All reclassifications must be reviewed and approved by BHR and the Bureau of the Budget. BHR reviews the job functions to ensure the reclassification is appropriate. The Bureau of the Budget reviews the position's location within the department organizationally, how the reclassification will be funded, and whether overall employee headcount will be affected. Proposed reclassifications go before the Legislature for approval with the Part A or B budget for individual departments unless the reclassification can be self-funded. Position reclassifications are considered self-funded if the funding will come from the same unit within a department, the same account and the personnel line.

State-wide and department-wide trends in position changes over time may not be readily apparent to management or legislators.

While management is aware of all newly created positions and reclassifications of existing positions, the cumulative effect of such changes over time, and any related State-wide or department-wide trends, may not be readily apparent to either the Administration or legislators. The budget process does not capture all reclassifications, and position changes that do go before the Legislature are typically presented individually in each department's proposed budget. A complete summary and comparison of year to year changes for all new, eliminated or reclassified positions by Administrative Unit, job classification or working title is not prepared as part of the regular budget process or at other specified periods.

[4] The Bureau of Human Resources, the Bureau of the Budget and the Office of Employee Relations are all within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

Organizational Structure

For many years both public and private sector organizations have sought to increase efficiencies and streamline operations by changing their organizational structures. These efforts are often initiated by a need to cut costs, but they may also be made to reflect the changing nature of work, the need to empower employees more than in the past, or the desire to deliver products and services more effectively.

> **Management layer** - one or more supervisory employees on the same horizontal level in a vertical organization. Usually layers of management are counted from the first level of staff persons with supervisory responsibilities (responsible for hiring, discipline, and performance evaluation) up to and including the chief executive officer.
>
> **Span of control** - the number of employees supervised by one manager or supervisor. The average span of control is the ratio of all employees to management staff, recognizing that supervisors are staff in one layer and supervisors in the next.

The Federal government and state governments have followed private sector efforts to downsize their organizations by decentralizing control and decision-making structures. Many of these efforts have included flattening organizations by reducing the number of management layers and decreasing the number of managers relative to rank and file.[5] Some states have passed legislation mandating a decrease in management layers and increasing average spans of control for State government. Texas has mandated an average span of 1:11 and, in the 1990's, Iowa moved from an average span of 1 supervisor for every 6.8 employees to 1 per 10.[6]

There is no consensus on an ideal span of control ratio or the optimum number of management layers for public organizations.

There is no consensus on an ideal span of control ratio or the optimum number of management layers for public organizations. Ideally, organizations should be structured to effectively achieve strategic goals in the most efficient manner possible. Organizations may be very hierarchical, with many management layers and small spans of control, or very flat with broad spans. No standard structure fits all organizations and there is no formula. In the words of one Public Administration professor, "it depends." One typical target to aim for is 4 or 5 management layers with a maximum of 6 for more complex organizations. Supervisors may have many direct reports for functions such as call centers or institutions, or only a handful when functions are highly technical, complex or policy sensitive.

[5] Alicia Bugarin, *Flattening Organizations: Practices and Standards*, California Research Bureau, California State Library, CRB-97-04, http://www.library.ca.gov/CRB/97/04/97004.pdf

[6] Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Window on State Government, Texas Performance Review *Disturbing the Peace*, Chapter 7 Employee Issues, EI 2: Streamline State Agencies, http://www.window.state.tx.us/tpr/tpr4/c7.ei/c702.html

States seeking to flatten their structures have focused on achieving an average span of control across the state, recognizing there will be appropriate variations among departments.

A good understanding of the functions and characteristics of an organization, department or agency is necessary to determine the appropriate span of control or number of staff per manager.[7] States seeking to flatten their structures have focused on achieving an average span of control across the state, recognizing there will be appropriate variations among departments. For some departments, narrow spans are appropriate. For example, close supervision and increased managerial input may be required when the work is complex or tasks are uncertain. Some of the factors influencing the appropriate span for any one entity include:[8]

- complexity of work;
- employee turnover;
- task certainty or similarity;
- non-supervisory duties of management;
- public scrutiny;
- geographic dispersion; and
- risk to the organization.

Some of the positive aspects of flatter organizations are:
- greater employee empowerment;
- faster decision making processes;
- improved communications;
- greater organizational flexibility;
- reduced personnel and overhead costs; and
- increased delegation resulting in improved job satisfaction.

There is general agreement, however, that organizations can increase their efficiency and effectiveness by methodically and thoughtfully redesigning their structure to achieve higher ratios of staff to managers. Non-value added layers of management and low spans of control have negative impacts on an organization such as: delays in timely completion of work; communication distortion and delays; diffusion of accountability; micro-management to justify existence and pay; and classification problems as layers are added to justify grade levels.[9] Consequently, some of the positive aspects of fewer layers and higher spans of control are greater employee empowerment, faster decision making processes, improved communications, greater organizational flexibility, reduced personnel and overhead costs and increased delegation resulting in improved job satisfaction.[10]

Restructuring to reduce middle management may result in reclassifying rather than eliminating positions. Iowa reduced its number of managers and supervisors by about 30 percent in part through attrition and reorganization, but in many cases supervisors were reclassified. The state modified its job classification system to recognize that some workers classified as supervisors were actually skilled professionals with occasional supervisory duties.[11] Similarly, there may be working supervisors and managers who, in addition to their administrative duties, perform the same work as the employees they oversee.

[7] City of Seattle, Washington, Office of City Auditor, *Ratio of Staff to Managers in City Government*, 1/25/96, http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/audit/report_files/9602-Staff-MgrsRatio.pdf

[8] South Florida Water Management District, Office of Inspector General, *Interim Study of Span of Control*, Report #99-28, http://www.sfwmd.gov/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PG_GRP_SFWMD_INSPECTORGENERAL/PG_SFW MD_INSPG EN_REPORTS/PORTLET_REPORTS/TAB372037/SPANCTRL.PDF

[9] *Ibid. Florida.*

[10] State of Texas, State Classification Office, *Assessing Your Organizational Span of Control*, September, 2003, power point http://www.hr.state.tx.us/systems/fte/documents/AssessingYourOrganizationalStructure.ppt#256,1, Assessing Your Organizational Span of Control

[11] *Ibid.Texas Performance Review.*

Summary

OPEGA was unable to objectively assess opportunities for savings in upper level administration and organizational structure due to the lack of meaningful information.

OPEGA was unable to determine whether there are real opportunities for cost savings associated with upper level administration and organizational structure in the State due to the lack of a meaningful foundation on which to complete an objective study. Standardized, consistent organizational charts that adequately delineate organizational structure based on reporting relationships or functions do not exist for all departments. Nor are there readily available resources useful for understanding the mission, goals, objectives, programs, functions and consumer demographics of the various State organizational units to the extent necessary to identify possible redundancies and overlaps. Likewise, the information available on specific positions was not sufficient to assess resources being dedicated to or supporting executive level functions or whether those resources could be reduced without experiencing unintended consequences. Attempts to gather additional data proved to be more time consuming than was beneficial for this study.

We believe the State should continue efforts to seek potential savings in this area and suggest actions for obtaining the information necessary to move forward.

During our work on this study, however, we did note:

- A shift in positions among Administrative Units. A larger percentage of positions are now in Administrative Units H, M, O, Y, Z, and X over salary grade 28 than 10 years ago. The primary driver is an increase in Administrative Unit X and Y positions.
- Organizational charts that suggest there may be some State organizational units with management layers and spans of control that are out of line with the benchmarks identified in our research.
- A lack of monitoring cumulative changes in organizational structure or position types from department-wide and State-wide perspectives over time.

Given these observations, OPEGA believes it would be worthwhile to continue efforts to seek potential savings in State administration staffing. In the Recommendations section of this report, we offer suggestions for developing some of the information necessary for executives and legislators to periodically assess and make adjustments to the structure of State government and the resources being devoted to administrative functions. The suggested actions represent a longer term effort that cannot be expected to produce savings within the current biennium. They would, however, put the State in a much better position to make reasoned decisions that may produce sustainable savings in future biennia.

The suggested actions would put the State in a much better position to make reasoned decisions that may produce sustainable savings in future biennia.

We recognize that the State's financial situation may dictate the need to eliminate some administrative positions in the short term without the benefit of objective information as a guide. If this proves to be the case, we suggest decisions on which specific positions to eliminate be left to the departments with whatever guidance the Legislature sees fit to provide on the number and types of positions or functions it feels should be reduced. Commissioners and department management have the most detailed knowledge about their organizations and operations and are in the best position to align position cuts with any reductions in programs and services necessitated by budget shortfalls.

Recommendations

We generally recommend seeking sustainable reductions in administrative costs through a comprehensive approach to evaluating State organizational structure and resources devoted to administration.

We generally recommend taking a comprehensive, longer-term approach to evaluating the State's current organizational structure and the resources devoted to administration. Such an approach does not provide short-term savings through immediate elimination of positions. However, we believe it is more likely to produce sustainable reductions in administrative costs, where appropriate, while still maintaining or enhancing the effectiveness of important government functions and programs. To support and facilitate such an approach, OPEGA offers the following recommendations:

A. The Legislature should consider requiring all departments to biennially submit uniform, accurate organizational charts depicting reporting relationships for all positions and functions. The charts should be developed in a format that is consistent State-wide and based on a pre-established standard defining the nature of the reporting relationship to be illustrated.[12] Such consistency should facilitate comparison of structures across State government and over time. The Executive and Legislative Branches could use these charts as one tool to assist with sound organizational analysis that focuses on aligning structures, systems and processes to achieve strategic objectives. Standardized charts would facilitate a common understanding of management layers, spans of control and geographic dispersion within the State's organizational structure. Opportunities for combining functions to reduce overlap, improve service, and increase administrative efficiency should also be more readily apparent.

To facilitate these efforts, the Legislature should consider: requiring standardized organizational charts for all departments; establishing a way to monitor position changes over time; and directing a market study of compensation packages for upper level positions.

B. The Legislature should consider establishing a mechanism for more comprehensively monitoring department and State-wide trends or patterns in position changes over time. One option would be to require biennial department-wide and State-wide analyses of the number of positions by Administrative Unit, job classification or other attribute similar to those performed by OPEGA for this study. Such analyses should allow for a better view of the cumulative effect of position changes that are made individually within the budget processes and provide an impetus for exploring whether position trends are in line with other trends in the work environment. It would also provide a means to assess whether actions such as consolidation of functions or elimination of vacant positions have had the expected results with regard to the number, types and placement of State positions.

C. The Legislature should consider directing the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to conduct a market study of total compensation packages (salary and benefits) for the types of positions included in Administrative Units H, M, O, X, Y and Z. According to DAFS, no market studies involving these positions have been conducted for at least the last five or six years. The results would be beneficial in

[12] See the Detailed Analysis section of this report for additional discussion on establishing an appropriate standard definition.

determining how the Executive Branch of State government ranks as an employer against other public and private employers in Maine and New England. With this knowledge, the State would be in a better position to determine whether adjustments to the current compensation packages are warranted to increase success in recruitment and retention or reduce personnel-related costs.

Detailed Analysis

Number of Positions

As discussed in the Methods and Scope section of this report, OPEGA analyzed the number of positions by Administrative Unit for 1997, 2002 and 2007. We also analyzed data for a subset of positions that included positions within Administrative Units H, M, O, Y, Z, as well as X at salary grade 28 and above (the subset).[13]

While there has been a minimal overall increase of less than 2% in total State positions, the number of positions in Administrative Units H, M, O, Y, Z and X at salary grade 28 and above has increased by 43.9%.

In 1996, over 1,350 state positions were eliminated as a result of recommendations by the Productivity Realization Task Force. Most positions were vacant, but several hundred people were laid off. At that time it was reported that 14% of all managerial and supervisory positions were eliminated; representing 20% of all positions eliminated. Table 3 illustrates what has occurred since that time.[14]

Our comparison of position data for Fiscal Years 1997 and 2007 shows that while there has been a minimal overall increase of less than 2% in total State positions, the number of positions in the subset has increased by 43.9%. The rate of growth in this group of positions over the last 10 years has exceeded growth rates for other types of positions in State government. Consequently, a larger percentage of the State's total workforce (4.7%) now hold positions in Administrative Units H, M, O, Y, Z, as well as X at salary grade 28 and above.

Table 3. Number of Positions Receiving Pay By Year

	FY1997	FY2002	FY2007	% Change 1997-2007
Total State Positions	13,660	14,624	13,864	1.49%
Positions in Subset*	453	562	652	43.93%
All Other Positions	13,207	14,062	13,212	0.04%
Subset as % of Total	3.32%	3.84%	4.7%	

*Generally, Administrative Units H, M, O, Y, Z, and X at salary grade 28 and above. See Methods and Scope section of report for more detail.

13 See the Methods and Scope section of this report for more detail on how this subset of positions was developed.

14 OPEGA's position counts include all positions that received some pay in year counted. Consequently, counts do not include positions that were vacant for the entire year.

The number of these positions in any one agency can appropriately differ greatly from that of another depending on type of work performed and services provided.

Maine State Government departments and agencies vary widely in the types of work performed and services provided. Some are primarily policy oriented and professional in nature while others provide direct services or enforce laws and regulations. In addition, while most agencies have a central location, many also have offices or work locations throughout the State. Consequently, the number of positions from our subset existing in any one agency can appropriately differ greatly from that of another. OPEGA did not find comparisons between departments or agencies to be particularly informative for identifying whether specific departments deviate from a State "norm".

We did note, however, that the increased proportion of State positions in the subset group is primarily due to an increase in Unit X - Confidential positions. The total of Unit X positions at all salary grades has increased over 47% compared to growth rates of 11.72% in Unit B - Professional Technical Services and 30.8% in Unit D - Supervisory Services positions, and decreases of over 18% in both Unit A - Administrative Services and Unit E - Operation/Maintenance. Table 4 summarizes position counts for each Administrative Unit by year.

Table 4. Executive Branch Position Counts by Administrative Unit and Year*

Administration Unit	1997	2002	2007	1997-2007	% Change
A - Administrative Services	2,564	2539	2,092	(472)	-18.41%
B - Professional/Technical Services	4,548	5069	5,081	533	11.72%
C - Institutional Services	1,258	1209	1,175	(83)	-6.60%
D - Supervisory Services	1,260	1346	1,648	388	30.79%
E - Operation/Maintenance**	2,491	2586	2,032	(459)	-18.43%
F - Law Enforcement	365	416	387	22	6.03%
G - State Police	309	324	307	(2)	-0.65%
H - Title V Confidential	52	52	54	2	3.85%
M - Special Assistant to Governor	28	29	43	15	53.57%
O - Salary Set by Statute	45	49	51	6	13.33%
X - Confidential	530	674	783	253	47.74%
Y - Financial Order Required	232	276	282	50	21.55%
Z - Ineligible for Bargaining Unit	115	229	85	(30)	-26.09%
Total	13,797	14,798	14,020	223	1.62%

*Includes positions for other miscellaneous agencies not reflected in totals in Table 3, i.e. Nursing, Medicine, and Dental Examiner Boards, Osteopathic Examiner, Education Unorganized, Workers Comp Cycles A&B, Property Tax Review and Blueberry Commission.

**DOT Highway Crew added to "E" in total, breakdown of supervisors and operation/maintenance personnel not available.

Presently, Administrative Unit X – Confidential is generally accepted to include employees at any level who:

The increased proportion of State positions in the subset group is primarily due to an increase in Administrative Unit X – Confidential positions.

- formulate policy by selecting among options, put policies into effect, or regularly participate in the essential process which results in policy proposals and the decisions to put such proposals into effect;
- may, through the exercise of independent professional judgment, commit substantial resources to further the best interest of the State (e.g. authority to select vendors, award bids, negotiate prices, terms, conditions of purchases), degree of discretion exercised must be considerable;
- are involved in policy matters including the development of particular objectives for a department or agency in fulfillment of its mission and selection of methods, means and extent of meeting such aims - determining methods of operation that are merely technical in nature does not constitute formulation of policy; or
- have access to the State's bargaining positions and strategies in advance of information surfacing at the bargaining table.

The shifting of positions into Administrative Units H, M, O, X, Y and Z may be reflective of the changing nature of work or organizational structure.

Additional understanding of the context and details associated with increases in Unit X positions for each department and agency would be necessary before any assessment could be made as to the reasonableness of that growth.

The shift of positions among Administrative Units may be due to a number of different factors such as changes in:

- nature of functions and types of work performed;
- complexity of tasks;
- organizational structure; and
- increased use of information technology.

For example, the use of personal computers has reduced the need for certain clerical functions, but increased the need for higher level information technology (IT) functions. This results in fewer positions in Administrative Unit A and more positions in Administrative Units B or X working to support computer systems and publicly accessed computer services. Previous budget cuts appear to have impacted administrative and operations/maintenance positions to a greater degree than other administrative units.

The shift also has financial implications as the State covers a portion of the employees' retirement contributions, or pays a salary premium, for positions in these Units.

Regardless of reasonableness, the shifting of State positions into Administrative Units H, M, O, X, Y, and Z has financial implications for the State due to the compensation arrangements established for these positions. For some employees in these Administrative Units, the State contributes 5% of salary toward retirement that is normally the responsibility of employees.[15] Other employees in these Administrative Units can elect to receive a 5% salary premium in lieu of the State covering a portion of their retirement contribution. According to the

[15] This arrangement also exists for some bargaining units within the other Administrative Units.

Commissioner of DAFS, the State started covering a portion of retirement contributions for employees in these Administrative Units, as well as some bargaining units, in the 1980's in lieu of a cost of living salary increase. OPEGA research shows that in 1993 the State reduced the portion covered for some Administrative Units as an apparent cost savings measure.

According to DAFS, this arrangement was established in lieu of past salary increases. Whether it is having a positive or negative financial impact on the State depends upon how current salaries for these positions compare to the market.

Whether the financial impact of this arrangement is positive or negative depends on how the total compensation package (salaries and benefits) for these positions actually compares to similar positions in the employment market where the State must compete for qualified workers. If the current salaries for these positions are still below market, then continuing this arrangement may provide financial benefits to the State by keeping total compensation packages competitive with the market without incurring increased employer costs for benefits that are tied to salary, i.e. employer contributions to retirement, worker's compensation insurance, sick pay, vacation accruals and life insurance. However, if current salaries are at or above market rates for similar positions, and additional salary supplements are not needed to attract and retain qualified professionals, then the State may be able to save between $700,000 and $3.5 million annually by reducing or eliminating these retirement contributions and salary premiums.

Management Layers and Spans of Control

State department organizational charts are not in standardized formats. Some depict macro level relationships, while others appear to be an alphabetical listing of positions within functions.

As part of this study, OPEGA sought possible opportunities for administrative savings through organizational restructuring. A full organizational analysis requires a comprehensive understanding of an organization's structure and activities and proved to be an unrealistic goal within the timeframe for this study. However, we did note that organizations seeking to streamline, including a number of states, often perform an assessment of the organization's management layers and spans of control. Consequently, we attempted to compare these aspects of Maine State government's organizational structure with appropriate benchmarks. We researched management layers and spans of control in government and other organizations and reviewed organizational charts submitted by Maine State departments in response to our request.

In the past, State departments and agencies have submitted organizational charts along with their budget submissions, although they were not required to do so during the last legislative session. Maine, like many other states, has not specified a standard format and the organizational charts submitted to us by departments and agencies for this study vary considerably. Some depict functions as well as reporting relationships at a macro level, while others appear to be an alphabetical listing of positions within functions. Some charts are quite detailed, while others did not appear to be completely accurate. Regional office charts were generally not provided.

Consequently, OPEGA was unable to effectively use the existing charts in comparing Maine to benchmarks for management layers and spans of control that we identified in our research. This research suggests that large complex organizations typically seek a maximum of 5 to 6 management layers when

streamlining their structures. Some of the departmental charts we reviewed appear to show up to eight layers, but it is not clear what constitutes a layer. It is possible that standardized charts would show that Maine State government is already fairly flat in its structure.

Some of the department charts submitted suggest that management layers and spans of control may not be optimal compared to benchmarks OPEGA identified, but the basis for relationships illustrated is unclear.

Similarly, span of control theory indicates that while the appropriate ratio of supervisors to staff varies depending upon many factors, generally spans of control should be greater in organizations seeking to streamline, i.e. more employees per supervisor. Some of the department charts submitted to OPEGA clearly illustrate how many positions directly report to supervisors, managers, division directors and commissioners. For these departments, it appears the number of direct reports per supervisor might range from 1:18 to1:5 or even 1:1. Again, however, it is unclear how the reporting relationships have been defined.

Ideally, good organizational charts are maintained as a management tool, assisting with short and long range planning, and facilitating consideration of a variety of issues such as consolidation options, restructuring, future planning for an aging workforce and the impact of proposed staff additions or reductions. OPEGA notes that ongoing efforts to reorganize and restructure some portions of Maine State government, with the goal of achieving efficiencies, cost savings and improved services could benefit from good organizational charts. Accurate charts would support and inform the work being done by each department or agency and assist those with oversight responsibilities.

Ideally, good organizational charts are maintained as a management tool, assisting with short and long range planning, and facilitating consideration of a variety of issues -- consolidation options, restructuring, future planning for an aging workforce and the impact of proposed staff additions or reductions.

Texas is one state that has established guidelines for on-going data collection about its structure. Annotated organizational charts identifying the total number of managers, supervisors and staff for each functional area and associated regional offices are required. In addition, quarterly data must be submitted on the number of managers, supervisors and non-supervisory employees for each functional area. This data is used to calculate management to staff ratios according to an established formula as part of monitoring whether the goal of an average management to staff ratio of 1:11 is being achieved. The organizational charts can also be used to proactively identify streamlining opportunities with an eye toward management reform.[16]

On-going management reform can result in managers being laid off or relocated as functions are consolidated, management layers are reduced and spans of control are increased.[17] This planned approach is generally preferable to downsizing solely by laying off employees, which does not address issues regarding which services should be provided or how they should be delivered. Layoffs are usually one-time, across the board cuts allowing short-term budget balancing, but budget gains may be reversed once revenues improve.

16 State of Texas, State Auditor, State of Texas Classification, FTE Reporting Guidelines Quarterly Report of Full-Time Equivalent Positions http://www.hr.state.tx.us/advisory/FTEMgmntStaffRatio.html

17 Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Window on State Government, *Gaining Ground, Progress and Reform in Texas Government, Volume 2,* Employee Issues, EI 1 Reduce State Government Employment and Curb Future Growth, 1994, http://www.window.state.tx.us/tpr/tprgg/ei01ei1.txt

Some important considerations in evaluating and making changes to organizational structure include:

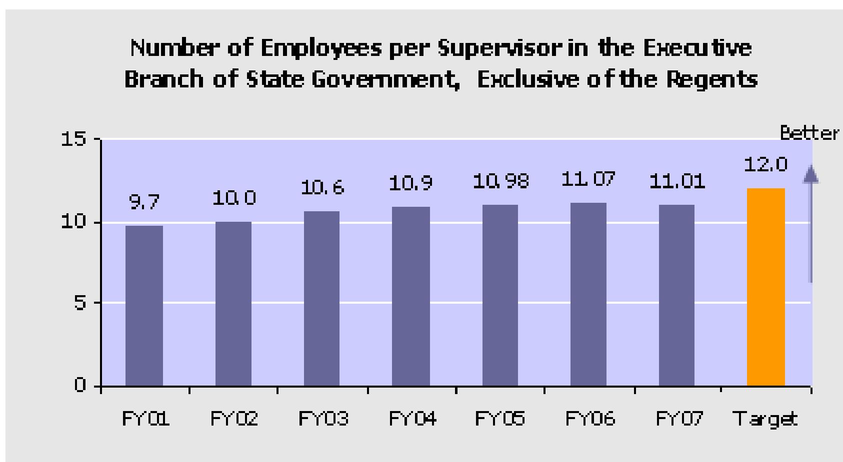
- Consistent application of specified criteria is critical to achieving standardized departmental organizational charts and other position data. For example, Texas and Iowa have developed definitions of what constitutes a manager, supervisor, management layer and span of control as part of their efforts. See Appendices A and B.

- Comparing one agency to another is inherently difficult due to the very different types of functions and services provided. However, comparisons between agencies that provide similar services or perform similar functions could be meaningful.

- Flattening hierarchical organizations can also impact advancement opportunities for employees under traditional job classification systems. Iowa has developed technical skill-based career paths that do not require employees to become supervisors to advance. According to DAFS Bureau of Human Resources, Maine has also developed such skill-based career paths for Engineers and Information Technology professionals.

- Achieving desired structural change without negatively impacting service provision can be a long-term process. Figure I illustrates Iowa's progress toward a target span of control ratio of 1:12 over the past 7 years.

Figure I. Iowa Average Spans of Control FY01 – FY07



Number of employees per supervisor in the executive branch of state government, exclusive of the Regents.
State of Iowa, Results Iowa: Accountability for Iowa http://www.resultsiowa.org/opscan.html#measure_1

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Commissioner and staff of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services for the time they spent assisting us with the information presented in this report. The additional perspective and contextual information they provided enabled us to prepare a more valuable final product.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – State of Texas FTE Reporting Guidelines http://www.hr.state.tx.us/advisory/FTE.html

John Keel, CPA

State of Texas STATE CLASSIFICATION

MANAGEMENT SPAN OF CONTROL

These guidelines have been modified from those received the fourth quarter of 1997. Please note that the calculation of management-to-staff ratio has been changed so that it is based on employee headcount as opposed to full-time equivalents. Also, the definitions have been clarified to include only *filled* positions, as of the last day of the quarter.

I. Background and Data Collection

In response to recent legislative changes, every agency and higher education institution is now required to submit additional information as part of the quarterly full-time equivalent (FTE) report. It is the understanding of the State Auditor's Office that what is called for is the development of a procedure for achieving a 1:11 management-to-staff ratio (not the actual implementation of this ratio), and the provisions of this bill are intended for agency planning purposes.

Your quarterly data submission must include:

- The number of managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees for each functional area as of the last working day of the quarter. This does *not* include those positions that are currently vacant.

Additionally, if you have not already done so, you must include:

- An annotated organizational chart identifying the total number of managers, supervisors, and staff for each functional area
- An organizational chart identifying the total number of managers, supervisors, and staff for each regional office

After submitting organizational charts the first time, do not submit new organizational charts unless there is a change in the number or type of functional areas, such as the creation of a new functional area, the splitting of one functional area into two or more separate functional areas, the transfer of one or more programs from one functional area to another, or the elimination of a functional area.

In determining what is a functional area, please use your highest-level organizational chart. In submitting information for regional offices, you may submit aggregate data for each region, rather than data for each specific unit office.

II. DEFINITIONS AND CALCULATIONS

When reporting the number of managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees, please use actual headcount of employees, ***not*** FTEs. Therefore, count both part-time employees and full-time employees as a full employee for purposes of calculating this ratio. For example, an employee who supervises one full-time employee and three half-time employees would have a management-to-staff ratio of 1:4. ratio ***not*** 1:2.5.

Please use the following definitions in identifying managers and supervisors. These definitions are intended as a general guideline. Each agency or institution, however, has the flexibility to categorize positions in a way that is most reflective of its organizational structure and mission. If you have existing internal definitions of manager and supervisor and want to use them for purposes of reporting this information, please include those definitions with your first report.

A manager or supervisor must actually manage or supervise *people* not merely manage or oversee a *function*.

A **Manager** has the responsibility for strategic operations and planning and

- Formulates statewide policy or directs the work of an agency, higher education institution, or subdivision; OR
- Administers one or more statewide policies or programs of an agency, higher education institution, or subdivision; OR
- Manages, administers, and controls a local branch office of an agency, higher education institution, or subdivision, including the physical, financial, or human resources; OR
- Has substantial responsibility in human resources management, legislative relations, public information, or the preparation and administration of budgets;

AND

- Exercises supervisory authority that is not merely routine or clerical in nature and requires the consistent use of independent judgment.

Examples of working titles that are often managers include: Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Division Director (of a major function), Academic Department Head, University Dean

A **Supervisor** is an employee who has responsibility for daily operations and the authority to do, or effectively recommend, most of the following actions:

- Hire
- Discipline (demote, suspend, terminate)
- Reward (grant merit increases, promotions, bonuses)
- Assign/reassign duties
- Approve leave requests
- Resolve/settle employee relations problems
- Formally evaluate employee performance

Examples of working titles that are often supervisors include: Custodial Crew Leader, Accounting Supervisor, Data Processing Supervisor, Office Manager, Clerical Pool Supervisor

The following formula will be used to calculate the management-to-staff ratios:

Management-to-staff Ratio = $[N+(S-1)]/S$

where:

N=Number of non-supervisory employees

S=Combined number of supervisors and managers

"S minus 1" excludes the top agency executive from being considered a supervised employee. Therefore, for those agencies that are directed by more than one top executive, AS minus 1" will be replaced with "S minus the number of top executives." For example, if your agency does not have an executive director, but is directed by three full-time, salaried commissioners, the formula "[N+(S-3)]/S" will be used.

III. EXAMPLES

A team leader who serves as the source person for difficult questions and problems from less experienced coworkers, coordinates the team's leave schedule, and presents project updates to the manager, but is responsible only for providing performance data toward the evaluation of team members or making disciplinary or reward decisions should be considered a non-supervisory employee.

A project manager who distributes work assignments and formally evaluates staff assigned to the project but does not grant leave requests, make hiring or general staffing decisions, or discipline or reward employees should be considered a non-supervisory employee.

A working supervisor who assigns duties; hires, disciplines, and rewards; approves leave requests and formally evaluates employees; and also spends one-third of the time performing non-supervisory duties, should be considered a supervisory employee.

Appendix B – Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau – Layers of Management – Update 8-12-94, attachments C & D http://www.legis.state.ia.us/lsadocs/IssReview/1994/IR214V.PDF

Attachment C

Definitions and Formulas Used by the Department of Personnel

In Calculating Layers of Management and Span of Control

The information included in this review was collected by the IDOP and is based on data submitted by the departments to the IDOP. Definitions given to departments by the IDOP are to be used when analyzing departments' organizational structure.

- Supervisor - An employee who has the authority to direct the work of permanent full-time and permanent part-time employees. Duties include the authority to do, or to effectively recommend, the following:
  - Hire and reassign.
  - Discipline (discharge, suspension, and salary reduction).
  - Reward (grant salary increases, promotions, and leave).
  - Assign/reassign duties, call back employees, and approve overtime.
  - Resolve/settle grievances.
  - Evaluate performance and take appropriate action.

- Layers of Management - A single or group of supervisory employees on the same horizontal plane in a vertical organization. Layers of management were calculated using the following method:
  - Consider the individual divisions of the department.
  - Count the number of layers in the longest vertical chain in each division.
  - Do not count the last layer (non-supervisory).
  - Include the department director as the first layer in each division count.
  - Sum the division counts.
  - Divide that sum by the number of divisions in the department.
  - The result is the average number of layers of management for the department.

- Span of Control - The number of employees reporting directly to a position having supervisory authority as defined above. Span of control is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\frac{N + (S - 1)}{S}$$

N = number of non-supervisory employees (full-time and part-time).
S = number of supervisory employees.

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Attachment D

Comparison of Executive Branch Department Organizations

July 1991 to July 1994

Department *	Span of Control 7/1/91	Span of Control 7/1/93	% Change 1991 - 1993	Span of Control 7/1/94	% Change 1991 - 1994	Layers of Management 7/1/91	Layers of Management 7/1/94	% Change 1991 - 1994
Department for the Blind	7.3	8.6	17.8%	9.4	28.8%	3.0	2.6	13.3%
Civil Rights	5.6	6.2	10.7%	7.0	10.7%	3.0	2.0	33.3%
College Student Aid	7.3	8.8	20.5%	8.8	20.5%	3.0	2.3	23.3%
Commerce	5.8	4.9	-15.5%	6.1	5.2%	4.0	3.0	25.0%
Corrections **	7.5	8.8	17.3%	9.2	22.7%	4.8	4.0	15.8%
Cultural Affairs	7.7	12.3	59.7%	12.3	59.7%	4.0	2.0	50.0%
Economic Development	3.8	3.8	0.0%	8.4	121.1%	4.3	3.3	23.3%
Education	7.1	7.0	-1.4%	9.8	38.0%	3.9	3.1	20.5%
Elder Affairs	5.6	5.0	-10.7%	8.3	48.2%	3.0	2.0	33.3%
Employment Services	7.4	8.7	17.6%	15.6	110.8%	5.1	3.3	35.3%
Ethics & Campaign Disclosure	5.0	6.0	20.0%	6.0	20.0%	1.0	1.0	0.0%
Fair Authority								
General Services	7.0	6.2	-11.4%	10.3	47.1%	3.9	2.9	25.6%
Human Rights	5.9	6.2	5.1%	6.1	3.4%	2.1	2.1	0.0%
Human Services	8.4	9.1	8.3%	9.7	15.5%	4.5	3.7	17.8%
Inspections & Appeals	7.2	8.2	13.9%	11.6	61.1%	3.2	2.8	12.5%
Law Enforcement Academy	6.0	7.0	16.7%	7.0	16.7%	2.0	2.0	0.0%
Management	3.0	3.7	23.3%	5.4	80.0%	2.0	2.0	0.0%
Natural Resources	7.5	7.9	5.3%	8.3	10.7%	3.9	3.8	2.6%
Parole	4.3	4.0	-7.0%	3.6	-16.3%	3.0	2.0	33.3%
Personnel	7.0	7.0	0.0%	14.0	100.0%	3.0	2.5	16.7%
Public Defense	13.1	11.7	-10.7%	11.7	-10.7%	3.0	3.0	0.0%
Public Employment Relations	10.0	10.0	0.0%	10.0	0.0%	1.0	1.0	0.0%
Public Health	6.7	7.7	14.9%	8.3	23.9%	3.3	3.2	3.0%
Public Safety	6.0	6.5	8.3%	6.5	8.3%	4.5	3.9	13.3%
Revenue & Finance	8.5	8.7	2.4%	12.5	47.1%	4.0	3.0	25.0%
Transportation	7.6	8.4	10.5%	10.6	39.5%	6.0	4.1	31.7%
Veterans Affairs	8.8	17.6	100.0%	19.1	117.0%	5.0	3.5	30.0%
Average	6.9	7.8	12.2%	9.5	36.6%	3.5	2.7	20.7%

* Data does not necessarily match data reported on a similar chart in November 1993. The IDOP adopted calculation methods that more accurately reflect the actual situation in the various departments following the initial report.

** This data is different from that turned into the IDOP. It was created using IDOP instructions and organization information from the Department.

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