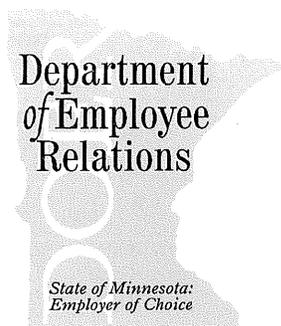


Report on Experimental Selection Projects

**Submitted to
Joint Subcommittee on Employee Relations
FY 2000**



REPORT ON EXPERIMENTAL SELECTION PROJECTS

M.S. 43A.04, Subdivision 9. Experimental or research projects.

The commissioner of employee relations may conduct experimental or research projects designed to improve recruitment, selection, referral, or appointment processes for the filling of state classified positions.

The commissioner shall meet and confer with the affected exclusive bargaining representative of state employees concerning the design and implementation of experimental and research projects under this subdivision.

Any provision in sections 43A.09 to 43A.15, associated personnel rules adopted under subdivision 3, or administrative procedures established under subdivision 4, is waived for the purposes of these projects. The number of appointments under this subdivision may not exceed five percent of the total number of appointments in the preceding fiscal year.

The commissioner shall report by September 1 to the legislative commission on employee relations the results of the experimental research projects conducted in the preceding fiscal year.

Experiments conducted during fiscal year 2000

The Department of Employee Relations, in cooperation with state agencies, conducted 12 selection experiments during the past fiscal year.

- Waiver of eligible list or exam scoring
 - Personnel Program Manager, Department of Transportation (page 3)
 - Psychological Services Director, MCF – Shakopee (page 4)
 - Executive Budget Officer Trainee/Executive Budget Officer, Department of Finance (twice – pages 5, 6)
 - Planning Director State – Federal Government Relations, Department of Transportation (page 7)
 - Transportation Generalist, Department of Transportation (page 8)
 - Engineer Senior Administrative, Department of Natural Resources (page 10)
- Supplementing an Eligible List Certification with Names from an Experimental Examination without a Certification
 - Personnel Program Manager, Department of Administration (page 11)
- Use of targeted recruiting in lieu of the *Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin*
 - Finance Agency Coordinator, Department of Finance (page 12)
 - DVS Program Director and DVS Administrative Supervisor, Department of Public Safety (page 13)

- Use of an unscored written test and position-specific search criteria
 - Minnesota Office Specialist Test (MOST) (page 14)
- Qualifying for transfer/demotion through on-the-job training and experience
Supervisory positions in the Middle Management Association (page 17)

Summary:

The most frequent subject of experimental projects was the waiver of an eligible list or exam scoring. This approach allowed agencies to use a “private sector” approach in which they collected, screened, but did not score applications by a predetermined examination process. This saved a great deal of time in the screening process, and eliminated sending out notices and dealing with appeals. This process allows an agency to consider a wide variety of potential candidates, or to search for specialized skills for a variety of vacancies within a single class.

The greatest number of appointments under an experimental exam was made using the Minnesota Office Specialist Test. While a minimum screen for qualifications common to all jobs was done, this exam basically involves assessing candidates’ qualifications for individual vacancies, rather than testing for the job class as a whole. This allows us to accommodate many different types of positions with different skill requirements.

Costs of producing this report:

As required by Laws of 1994, Chapter 559, the estimated cost of preparing this report is \$2000.

Experiments 1 - 7: Waiver of creation of eligible list or exam scoring

Description: A "private sector" process was utilized to screen applicants, omitting formal scoring, notices, eligible list and certification

Experiment 1: Personnel Program Manager

Date begun: June 24, 1999

Participating Agency: Department of Transportation

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Metro Division of the Department of Transportation includes approximately 1550 employees. When the Personnel Program Manager position was vacated in April, 1999, the internal posting resulted in only one expression of interest from an individual who was not eligible to transfer. The department attempted to use the current eligible list, requesting additional information from applicants on that list. Out of seven responses, only two were considered viable candidates for the position by the hiring manager. He wanted additional choices to interview, and wanted the process completed quickly due to upcoming changes in classification in the division which would impact the division HR office.

The examination was posted on July 19, 1999, and waived the following sections of Chapter 43A: 43A.10 Examinations, 43A.12 Ranking of Eligibles, and 43A.13 Certification of Eligibles. The examination was posted in the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin and on DOER's web page. It was advertised twice in the statewide editions of the Sunday Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers, and on the papers' electronic classified section. It was posted on a variety of additional web sites. Applicants were asked to submit an explicit cover letter and resume outlining their experience and education as they related to the qualifications in the job announcement.

Results/Analysis: Seventy-five applications/resumes were received. A screening panel reviewed each, and identified seven to interview. A competency-based interview process with a five-member panel of Mn/DOT managers and others was conducted. An individual with public sector and military personnel management experience was hired a few days after Labor Day.

Assessment: The division management was very satisfied with the outcome of the expedited process as it allowed them to consider additional candidates in a very timely manner.

Experiment 2: Psychological Services Director
Date begun: August 20, 1999
Participating Agency: Department of Corrections, MCF – Shakopee
Appointments: 1

Explanation: MCF – Shakopee had created a Psychological Services Director position to provide overall administrative and management supervision for all program and residential activities within the facility's treatment programs. The treatment programs include the areas of chemical dependency, mental health, and sex offender. The Psychological Services Director was not only an administrative position, but also required clinical expertise. It was the facility's intent to permanently fill the position as expediently as possible with a capable person. They also anticipated there would be minimal qualified internal candidates to recruit for this position. They produced a recruitment brochure and distributed it to various professional associations and agencies that typically have membership and/or employees with credentials necessary for this position. They did not establish a closing date and accepted applications until the position was filled.

Results/Analysis: There were only six applicants for the position consisting of five males and one female; there were no minorities and no persons with disabilities. The agency offered to interview all six applicants, but only three responded. Of the three applicants interviewed, one withdrew due to salary concerns. The agency appointed an applicant who had extensive private experience working in an institutional setting.

Assessment: Although the agency had anticipated a greater number of applicants, they were satisfied with the process as they were able to hire a highly qualified individual.

Experiment 3: Executive Budget Officer Trainee/Executive Budget Officer

Date begun: October 29, 1999

Participating Agency: Finance

Appointments: 2

Explanation: The agency had two vacancies and wanted the option of filling at the level most appropriate to the level of qualifications of the final candidates selected. They also wanted applicants to be able to apply for both classes, if interested, using only one application. The agency used a selection process that is similar to that typically used in the private sector. The selection process identified minimum experience and education combinations desired for each level, and then included an oral interview. The process waived the following Minnesota Statutes: 43A.10 Examinations, Eligibility to Compete; 43A.12, Ranking of Eligibles; and 43A.13 Certification of Eligibles.

The Executive Budget Officer classification implements state budget policy and consults with state agency management on fiscal policy and programmatic issues. The class helps State agencies develop their operating and capital budget proposals and monitors state agency spending. The agency's recruitment efforts included advertisements in the Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, Insight News and Minnesota Daily. Internet postings were placed with the National Association of State Budget officers, Hamline University, Harvard University, U of M, and Departments of Finance and Employee Relations. Postings were sent to the Association of Minnesota Counties; League of Minnesota Cities; Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul; and Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington Counties.

Results/Analysis: In November 1999, 131 applications were rated at the Trainee level, and this resulted in 69 applicants who met the minimum selection requirements and 62 who did not. Of the 69, 23 were females, seven were minorities and three had disabilities. Seventy-nine applications were rated at the Executive Budget Officer level, with 59 applicants meeting minimum selection requirements. Of the 59, 16 were females, six were minorities and three had disabilities. Nine candidates were invited to an oral presentation and structured interview process. Two job offers were extended and candidates hired.

Assessment: The agency, while very satisfied with the results of the process, did make some recommendations as to the type of experience to request if the experiment was to be repeated.

Experiment 4: Executive Budget Officer Trainee/Executive Budget Officer

Date begun: May 26, 2000

Participating Agency: Finance

Appointments: 2

Explanation: The agency wanted to repeat the experiment that had been conducted in October, 1999, as they had been satisfied with the process and the results. Based on their experience in the prior experiment, they made some minor changes to the description of related work experience, additions to the list of related degrees, and a more in-depth description of the work performed by the Executive Budget Officer classification. They had two vacancies, and wanted to be able to hire according to the level of the candidate pool. They also wanted applicants to be able to apply for both classes, if interested, using only one application. The agency used a selection process that is similar to that typically used in the private sector. The selection process identified minimum experience and education combinations desired for each level, and then included an oral interview. The process waived the following Minnesota Statutes: 43A.10 Examinations, Eligibility to Compete; 43A.12, Ranking of Eligibles; and 43A.13 Certification of Eligibles.

The Department's recruitment efforts included advertisements in the Star Tribune and the Pioneer Press. Internet postings were placed with the National Association of State Budget officers, Hamline University, Harvard University, U of M, and Departments of Finance and Employee Relations.

Results/Analysis: In May, 2000, the agency reviewed 148 applications at the Trainee level with 67 meeting the selection criteria and 81 not meeting the criteria. Of the 61 meeting the criteria, 33 were females, twelve were minorities and two had disabilities.

At the Executive Budget Officer level, there were 94 applications with 58 applicants meeting the selection criteria and 36 not meeting the criteria. Of the 58 applicants meeting the criteria, 24 were females, seven were minorities and one had disabilities. Eleven candidates were invited to the oral presentation and structured interview process. Two job offers were made and accepted.

Assessment: Management in the Department of Finance was pleased with the process because they had a large applicant pool that was well represented by women. They were also pleased that they would have some flexibility in considering this pool of qualified applicants again should they have subsequent vacancies in the near future. They did recognize that if they were to announce this again in the future, they would revise the description of related experience in budget development and analysis of budget proposals and issues so that it is clear to applicants that they were looking for public sector experience in that area.

Experiment 5: Planning Director State – Federal Government Relations

Date begun: September 17, 1999

Participating Agency: Department of Transportation

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The hiring supervisor and the Division Director felt that an experimental exam process would be the best way to fill this vacancy because the position needed skill sets that were tough to objectively quantify using a traditional examination process. They felt that the “softer” skills requirements (communication skills, accountability, interpersonal skills, adaptability/flexibility, etc.) were more important at the time of hire than the technical skills (knowledge of AASHTO, and federal/state organizations). The hiring supervisor felt that the right candidate could be taught the technical content if they had a high level of the softer skills.

In the application process, the applicants were asked to submit an explicit cover letter, resume and application outlining their education and experience in each of Mn/DOT’s competency areas (Leadership, Learning and Strategic Systems Thinking, Quality Management, People Management, Organizational Knowledge, Technical Knowledge and Individual Characteristics). Applicants were then assessed on their qualifications as they related to competencies with special attention given to the “softer” skill sets covered under Individual Characteristics.

Results/Analysis: The agency received nine applications. All applications were reviewed by the hiring supervisor and Division Director. Seven of the nine applicants were Mn/DOT employees, and a current Mn/DOT employee was subsequently appointed to the position. The agency felt that they were better able to assess the candidates’ softer skill sets using this method along with a competency-based interview. They saved a considerable amount of time in the selection process because they did not have to score, send notices, or certify an eligible list. They were able to screen, interview, and make a job offer in a relatively short period of time.

Assessment: The agency felt that the experiment was a success in that it allowed them flexibility in the exam process, allowing them to interview and extend an offer of employment to the most qualified candidate without an extensive selection process. Both management and the applicants to whom they spoke directly expressed positive comments about the streamlined process.

Experiment 6: Transportation Generalist
Date begun: December, 1999
Participating Agency: Department of Transportation
Appointments: 26

Explanation: The department requested an experimental exam because of their need to greatly reduce the overall time-frame of their hiring process due to the stiff competition for qualified candidates from other jurisdictions and the private sector. They needed to establish a more streamlined, efficient and timely process for attracting and selecting highly qualified technical staff. The need became more critical when a recently completed workforce profile indicated that approximately one third of their technical and engineering work force would be eligible to retire over the next five years.

The experimental examination was developed to allow on-the-spot job offers to candidate who possessed a two-year Civil Technology or related degree (i.e., Architectural Drafting, CAD, Surveying, Construction, Mechanical Drafting) and passed a competency-based interview. Previous recruitment efforts proved ineffective because candidates were accepting positions with private industries well before Mn/DOT could finish the traditional exam process. The following sections of Chapter 43A were waived: 43A.10 Examinations, Eligibility to compete, 43A.12 Ranking of eligibles, and 43A.13 Certification of eligibles.

As part of this process, trained recruitment teams consisting of Human Resource professionals, hiring managers and Transportation Generalist incumbents visited schools within the five state area that offered the above mentioned degree programs. The recruitment teams gave presentations to the classes about Mn/DOT, the Transportation Generalist classification series, compensation and benefits, and current statewide vacancies. Immediately following the presentation, interested students were "tested" using a competency-based behavioral event interview process. Candidates who met the established threshold for the competency-based interview were given immediate job offers that were contingent upon graduating from the degree program and passing all required background checks.

Results/Analysis: Of the 52 candidates who went through the process, 44 met the minimum requirements (degree plus meeting the established threshold for the competency-based interview). Twenty-six candidates accepted offers and were placed in various locations upon graduation. The remaining 18 candidates either declined offers or were placed "on hold" awaiting openings in their preferred geographic locations. To date, only one candidate has left Mn/DOT to return to school.

Assessment: Management is very satisfied with the process and would like the ability to continue hiring under the experimental exam process. Additionally, the Office of Human

Resources has been monitoring the performance of the hires by reviewing the mid-probationary reviews for all Transportation Generalist hired via this method. Preliminary results show that the experimental exam process has yielded hires that are considered to be above average in performance and have exceeded the expectations of their hiring managers and supervisors.

Experiment 7: Engineer Senior Administrative (Director of Engineering, Surveying and Facilities)

Date begun: June 23, 2000

Participating Agency: Natural Resources

Appointments: 0

Explanation: This position was in a unit that had undergone some recent restructuring at the time the examination was announced, and the classification of the position was in question. The Assistant Commissioner for Administration did not want to “require” licensure as an Engineer which had previously been done for another position in the same classification. Statutes that were waived included MS. 43A. 12 Ranking of eligibles, and 43A.13 Certification of eligibles. By not creating an eligible list, the agency would reduce the amount of time between the acceptance of applications and the actual interview and selection process. It also would reduce the time in processing unqualified applicants.

Results/Analysis: This examination attracted 28 applicants. These were sorted into “qualified” and “not qualified” groups, based on the factors listed in the examination announcement. However, before the examination process went any further, a broader reorganization of the engineering and field services functions took place, and the position was Hay-rated. A new classification was created, NR Bureau Administrator Field Operations. The examination for that classification was announced in September 2000, under normal selection procedures.

Assessment: Although the process was cut short, it did provide the agency with a more efficient method of conducting the examination process. Since there is only one position like this in state service, it also made sense that the requirement of creating an eligible list was waived because the chance of using such a list again would be unlikely.

Experiment 8: Personnel Program Manager

Description: Supplementing an eligible list certification with names from an experimental examination that had no certification

Date begun: August 10, 1999

Participating Agency: Administration

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The agency had a vacancy for a Personnel Program Manager in early 1999 and announced the exam competitively on February 5, 1999. The list of 16 passing applicants was certified on March 4, 1999. Vacancy filling was deferred because of the legislative session. Following the session, the agency selected six finalists from the list. This was an incomplete certification, and they requested the ability to consider another pool of candidates for this class. The pool was from a July, 1999 experimental exam of the Department of Transportation for a vacancy at that agency. (see experiment #1)

The experiment involved supplementing the incomplete original certification with additional names from the experimental exam announced for Transportation. Administration screened the second pool for finalists that met the same criteria used for their first list. The requirements for each examination were not identical, but contained similar elements of experience in human resource administration, planning and policy development.

Results/Analysis: The agency selected seven additional names for consideration. Five candidates from the original list were interviewed, plus one of the additional candidates from the DOT examination. The latter candidate was ultimately hired.

Assessment: From the Commissioner of Administration's perspective, the results of this experimental certification process allowed him to hire the person he felt was best qualified for this position. It allowed the department to take advantage of recruiting done by another agency and consider a candidate with excellent credentials without having to go to the time and expense of reopening the examination again.

Experiments 9 - 10: Alternative recruiting

Description: Use of targeted recruiting in lieu of the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin

Experiment 9: Finance Agency Coordinator

Date begun: October 1999

Participating Agency: Finance

Appointments: 1

Explanation: The Department of Finance determined it was absolutely critical to fill this vacancy expeditiously with a capable person. The agency wanted to recruit and consider government employees from other public jurisdictions and to expand the applicant pool. The experiment involved the use of targeted postings in lieu of the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin publication for an open competitive announcement. This presented the opportunity to begin advertising and recruiting three weeks sooner than the next bulletin date. The Department of Finance advertised in the Sunday publications of both the St. Paul and Minneapolis newspapers and the Minnesota Association of Counties. Postings were faxed to the League of Cities, Minnesota Association of Counties, Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington Counties, the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Hamline University, Harvard University, U of M, National Association of State Budget Officers and State Agency HR Offices. The resumes were reviewed and screened based on pre-established job-related criteria that were published in the recruitment materials.

Results/Analysis: In an effort to recruit a large applicant pool, the original deadline of October 29, 1999 was extended to November 19, 1999. As a result of its recruitment efforts, a total of 35 applications were received from 24 males and 11 females. One applicant was a minority. Twenty-four applicants passed the pass/fail exam, of which eleven were female, one a minority, and none had disabilities. Applications were scored by November 24, 1999, and notices sent to applicants by December 7, 1999. Interviews were conducted on December 30, 1999, a job offer made, and an appointment made on December 31, 1999.

Assessment: The department was very pleased with the experimental process and the results. Although the deadline extension slowed the process a bit, this process allowed the department to appoint an individual to the position prior to the beginning of the legislative session. The candidate that was appointed has proved to be an effective team leader and performs exceptionally well. The Finance Department considers the experimental exam process to be a success.

Experiment 10: Division of Vehicle Services Program Director and
Division of Vehicle Services Administrative Supervisor

Date begun: May 11, 2000

Participating Agency: Department of Public Safety

Appointments: 4, 3 DVS Program Director and 1 DVS Administrative
Supervisor

Explanation: The Department of Public Safety reorganized its Division of Vehicle Services, creating four new management/supervisory positions. The DVS Director made a commitment to the Commissioner to fill these positions by July 1, 2000. In an effort to expedite the implementation of the organization, the department requested approval to waive public notice of the announcement of the examination in the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin so that they could more quickly recruit for their positions. They placed ads in the Minneapolis (statewide) and St. Paul Sunday newspapers, entered it on their internet site, posted it on all Public Safety employee bulletin boards, and advertised it to other state agencies via a Human Resources listserv. They used a standard pass/fail experience and training rating selection process to narrow the field of applicants.

Results/Analysis: They received 89 applications for DVS Program Director, of which 33 were female, eight were veterans, two had disabilities, and one was a minority group member. Forty applications were sent to the DVS Director for consideration. A four-person panel interviewed 19 candidates and referred five candidates to the DVS Director. Three offers were made; one candidate started on 7/24/00 and two on 8/14/00.

They received 63 applications for DVS Administrative Supervisor, of which 37 were females, five were veterans, and one had disabilities. Twenty-three applications were sent to the DVS Director for consideration. A three-person panel interviewed seven candidates and referred three candidates to the DVS Director. An offer was made and the candidate started 7/10/00.

Assessment: While the agency did not meet its desired hiring date of 7/1/00, it was able to hire more quickly than it would have if it had used the traditional announcement process in the Minnesota Career Opportunities Bulletin. They were very satisfied with the end results.

Experiment 11: Minnesota Office Specialist Test (MOST)

Description: Applicants take an unscored written test to qualify for a single candidate pool used for vacancies in four clerical classes. Hiring agencies designate position-specific search criteria for referrals from the pool. All candidates meeting the criteria are referred in random order.

Date Begun: December 18, 1998

Job Classes: Office Specialist, Central Services Administrative Specialist, Customer Services Specialist, Office and Administrative Specialist

Participating Agencies: Statewide

Appointments: 136

Explanation: Over the past several years, the State and AFSCME, Council 6 (the exclusive representative for the State's clerical employees) cooperatively developed a plan to consolidate clerical jobs into fewer job classes, each encompassing a broad range of duties and qualifications. In July 1998, several thousand clerical employees moved from some 50 clerical job classes into 13 new consolidated classes.

On December 18, 1998, a single application and selection process was announced for the four classes at the first two levels of the new consolidated clerical series. While this was an open competitive announcement (the public, as well as current employees, may apply), information is maintained on whether applicants are state employees and, if so, where they are employed. This allows agencies to receive referrals limited to state employees or only employees of their own agency, as well as open competitive referrals.

Process: Applicants submit one application and take one test to be eligible for referral to all four classes. Several sections of the written test assessing skills determined to be essential for all types of clerical work (speed and accuracy, math, filing) are required. Depending on time and interests, applicants may take additional sections assessing more specialized skills such as proofreading and coding. Finally, all applicants respond to a set of Skill/Interest Inventory questions to indicate their interest in and qualifications for particular types of work. Examples include "I have at least six months of full-time training and/or experience with one or more word processing packages and I would accept jobs that involve word processing as a major activity" and "I would accept jobs that involve dealing with customers/clients in person as a major activity (e.g., receptionist)."

While the written test is unscored, applicants are required to correctly answer a certain number of questions in the required sections. This was intended only as a minimal screen for qualifications common to all jobs so the cutoff is intentionally low (59 correct out of

110 items) to eliminate just those applicants with little likelihood of success in clerical work. In lieu of scores, applicants receive a customized notice stating their number of items correct in each section of the test and explaining the referral process and other special procedures. Those who do not qualify receive information about their number of items correct in comparison to the cutoff. Under the standard retesting policy, individuals may retake the written test every six months to try to improve the number correct or to take additional sections. Test instructions and sample questions are available on the DOER web page and in hard copy to help applicants prepare. Candidates in the pool are able to update Skill/Interest Inventory responses at any time without reapplying or retesting.

As vacancies occur, agencies search the pool for candidates whose qualifications, interests and availability (e.g., employment condition and location) match the position. Agencies may use the number of items correct on one or more sections of the written test, skill/interest responses or a combination of both. For example, an agency with a word processing vacancy might look for candidates who had high numbers of items correct in the proofreading and spelling sections and selected word processing on the Skill/Interest Inventory. Agencies may also administer additional testing to screen for essential qualifications and verify Skill/Interest Inventory responses.

Everyone in the referral pool who meets the search criteria is referred to the agency. Names appear in random order. In addition to the usual information such as name and address, agencies receive a report showing each referral's number of items correct on sections of the test. However, agencies do not receive copies of applications or resumes. Because agencies wanted an open competitive process generating hundreds of additional applicants and because the process may produce lengthy referrals, human resource directors agreed that they would request resumes directly from applicants. This also provides faster turnaround on referrals since agencies do not wait while DOER copies applications.

In addition to detailed instructions on requesting referrals and a form to document search criteria, agencies have received a variety of information to assist in developing criteria. This has included a description of the written test content areas and Skill/Interest Inventory items; the content areas and relevant skill/interest items for former class titles that became part of the new classes; the mean, median and range of items correct that applicants have achieved on each section of the written test; and the number of applicants selecting each Skill/Interest Inventory item.

Results/Analysis: Through the end of Fiscal Year 2000, 1,947 candidates had taken the Minnesota Office Specialist Test. Of these, about 1,674 (over 86%) qualified for the referral pool. Items correct on the required sections ranged from 21 to 105 of the 110 questions, with a mean of 70.20 and median of 71.00. In comparison, on a parallel set of 110 questions, promotional applicants for Clerk 2 (N = 1,678) had a range of 10 to 109 correct with a mean of 73.06 and median of 74.

The written test answer sheet is also the means by which applicants record their skills and interests. Capturing the information in scannable form is important because keying all the data is not feasible from a workload perspective. Applicants have had some difficulty correctly recording their responses in this format. DOER subsequently developed a hard copy checklist so applicants may later modify data provided on the answer sheet. It's a positive sign that a survey of agencies found that most felt applicants were accurately reporting their skills and interests.

Assessment: In the original survey (FY '99), the most frequently cited disadvantage of the new process was the lack of applications, although only six respondents indicated this. The majority feels it's no more than a minor inconvenience. It is encouraging to note that in Fiscal Year 2000, 2,682 people applied for the MOST. As we develop our recruiting plan we hope to increase these numbers and create a more diverse applicant pool. Even though the agencies stated that they are willing to sacrifice receiving the employment applications in order to receive the certification list as quickly as possible, DOER Staffing is very close to completing an imaging project which will allow the hiring agency to use the internet to view applications as soon as the certification list is generated.

Overall, the results of the MOST are positive and DOER staff and agencies have gained experience and are more comfortable and knowledgeable with the process.

Experiment 12: Use of on-the-job experience and training to demonstrate qualifications for transfer or demotion.

Description: Instead of passing the standard selection process for the class, supervisors on notice of permanent layoff may demonstrate their qualifications to transfer or demote to a new job class through a trial period of up to 18 months in the job.

Date Begun: November 5, 1993

Participating Organizations: Middle Management Association and all state agencies

Number of Appointments: 1 since November 1993

Explanation: During negotiations for the 1993-1995 contract, the Middle Management Association, representing state supervisors, raised concerns about the ability of its members to locate other state employment when displaced by layoff. As agencies reorganize to flatten organizations, one group particularly affected is supervisors. The Association expressed concern about what it sees as a trend toward a smaller number of supervisors. At the same time supervisors are being impacted by downsizing and restructuring, the lack of new supervisory positions and the low turnover among supervisors mean those facing layoff have less opportunity for placement in another state position.

In order to address those concerns, the Department of Employee Relations and the Middle Management Association jointly developed this experiment to allow additional flexibility in placing supervisors who might otherwise be laid off. This was the first experiment designed cooperatively by the department and an exclusive representative. The experiment was subsequently extended for the 1995-1997, 1997-1999, and 1999-2001 contracts.

Under several of the agreements between the State and its exclusive representatives, employees notified of layoff are eligible to claim vacancies in other job classes and agencies. However, to be considered for the position, the employee must receive a passing score on the existing examination for the job class. Under this experiment, supervisors notified of permanent layoff may express interest in transfer/demotion to a vacancy for which they do not qualify through the normal selection process. (If the supervisor is able to qualify, the normal provisions of the contract apply instead.)

The agency with the vacancy compares the supervisor's qualifications to their needs and the requirements of the position. Based on this review, the agency determines whether the supervisor might reasonably demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities for the vacancy through a period of experience and training in the position. If so, the agency may place the supervisor in the position for a period of up to 18 months.

During that time, the hiring agency is expected to provide experience and training to allow the supervisor to develop and demonstrate qualifications for the job. The agency is also responsible for evaluating and documenting the supervisor's possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities essential for the position. If the agency determines that the supervisor has demonstrated these during the trial period, the supervisor may be appointed to the vacancy on an unlimited basis. If, during the 18 months, the agency finds that the supervisor is not successfully demonstrating qualifications for the position, the supervisor is placed on layoff from the original agency and job class.

Results/Analysis: Information about the experiment was included in the 1993-1995, 1995-1997, 1997-1999, and 1999-2001 MMA agreements to make supervisors aware of this new alternative. Materials explaining the experiment and encouraging agency participation were distributed to all state agencies.

In the first fiscal year of the experiment (1994), no appointments were made. One appointment occurred at the end of FY 95. The supervisor, on notice of layoff from an accounting job, accepted an experimental appointment to a supervisory vacancy in the information technology field. After just over two months on the job, the supervisor decided he preferred to remain in his previous field and subsequently accepted demotion to a supervisory accounting position in another agency. There have been no further appointments under this experiment.

Assessment: The experiment has produced only one appointment since November of 1993. However, the number of permanent layoffs among supervisors has limited opportunities for its use. From the time of the distribution of the procedures through the end of the first fiscal year, there were no permanent layoffs in the MMA bargaining unit. Any supervisors notified of layoff were able to locate other positions within state government. During FY 95, there were four layoffs among supervisors where the individual was unsuccessful in locating another state position. In FY 96, agencies laid off 17 employees in MMA, 18 in FY 97, 9 in FY 98, 3 in FY 99, and 6 in FY 00.

While initial use of this experiment by state agencies had been disappointing, we continued it for yet another biennium, especially in view of continuing layoffs. The approach represents a win/win situation for both the State and the employee and offers the opportunity for significant savings to the State if we can avert a layoff. When permanent layoffs occur, we will continue to encourage agencies and supervisors to explore the use of this alternative.