EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND
THE SERVICE FIRST INITIATIVE: An Analysis of Options

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BY

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Governor Jeb Bush
State of Florida
Florida Capitol Building
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Bush:

I have the privilege to submit to you Equal Employment Opportunity and the Service First Initiative. The report is the product of extensive research and analysis over the fall months of 2003. Equal employment opportunity is important to Florida because it ensures a diversified and qualified workforce. Bad hiring practices would ultimately put a strain on effective services delivery.

After examining several alternative policies, my recommendation is that Florida should reinstate the minimum qualifications to its job announcement instead of using broad knowledge, skills, and abilities. The policy alternative is recommended based on the use of two evaluative criteria: political feasibility and administrative feasibility. Reinstating minimum qualifications scored the highest on the all criteria. Implementing universal employment codes for all State positions did not perform well on either criterion by scoring very low in each category. The third option suggests the creation of a centralized agency to develop, implement, and enforce new hiring policies for all the job classifications did poorly on all criteria.

Minimum qualifications have been the traditional way to successfully draft job announcements. The other two policy options need public approval and proper planning to function at their peak levels. This suggests that increased efficacy would cause the other two policy options to improve the areas of political and administrative feasibility.

This recommendation has the potential to improve recruitment and selection overall. Florida is proud of its title of equal opportunity employer, which encourages diversity and protects against discrimination. A more equitable hiring process will help Florida effectively cope with the challenges of employment in the future.

Respectfully,

Samia Eason
Personnel Technician
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Equal employment opportunity and fair hiring practices are imperative to recruiting and selecting capable candidates for State jobs. With the new initiative, Service First, Gov. Jeb Bush had ensured all applicants and employees a more equitable employment system. The initiative plans to increase accountability and responsibility. It also pledges to decrease discriminatory practices during pre-employment. Unfortunately, this report has discovered that this new mandate alone are not enough to erase unfair hiring practices. What the research uncovered was that these same safeguards were the exact tools being used to surreptitiously recruit and select applicants.

Recognizing this flaw, an alternate plan was produced with possible solutions. Three options were proposed as alternative policy options. Reinstating minimum qualifications, uniform employment regulations for all State positions, and a centralized employment agency that would develop, implement, and enforce all State management policies were presented as remedies to the problem.

The information in this report was supported by several forms of data collection. The interviews of State recruitment professionals, reading works from scholars and experts of civil service reform and information from policies, employment documents, and statutes were the way data were compiled. Results from the survey shed light on what practitioners had been facing while implementing the new process. The literature that was reviewed highlighted the opposing and affirming views of the proposed management policy options.

Based on the assessment of the alternatives using the two evaluative criteria, the reinstatement of minimum qualifications is recommended. This option would be the most viable policy to provide effective hiring of applicants. Minimum qualifications are
the essence of job announcements. They describe and market the vacant position to qualified candidates. The other two policies need to be more efficient politically and administratively to become successful alternatives. The reinstatement of minimum qualifications would help control discrimination in recruitment and selection process, reduce confusion on the part of potential applicants and hiring managers, and encourage more qualified candidates to apply.
I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2001, the ratification of Senate Bill 466 enacted the Service First initiative into law. It detailed the new human resource (HR) system as a way to “streamline agency employee recruitment and selection processes” (Service First, n.d.). It gave the agencies the authority to devise employment policies and their own equal employment standards that would simplify their hiring process. Service First required these standards for advertising all Career Service positions. As for Senior Management Service (SMS) and Selected Exempt Service (SES) candidates, the Department of Management Services has not developed procedures for monitoring agency recruitment practices nor adopted rules to guide agencies in this process (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability [OPPAGA], 1994). It is the agencies prerogative to develop equal employment standards, as well as create a recruitment and selection process for these job classes. State agencies use job opportunity announcements (JOA) to briefly and vaguely explain the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) needed to apply. The application of all interviewed candidates, a recruitment and selection guide (which lists all applicants’ screening scores and/or final scores and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission compliance information), and the initial and detailed screening forms present to determine eligibility for employment are also part of the recruitment process. These same items are in place to detect unfair employment practices. This is the agencies way of safeguarding its equal employment standards.

Although agencies had these safeguards in place, unfortunately, discrimination still occurs. Ironically, these same safeguards can be used against the very system it was set up to protect. For instance, there was a job opening in a state agency for a print shop
manager, which was classified as SES. For this position, the JOA stated applicants should possess experience working with printing equipment and supervisory skills. According to the position’s recruitment and selection guide there were two top candidates eligible for the job; however, only one candidate’s KSAs matched the description outlined in the JOA. Furthermore, the incumbent that was recommended for selection was not the candidate that had the KSAs stated in the JOA. This agency’s HR policies stipulated that an applicant could be hired if they were within 10 points of the applicant with the highest screening score. The recommended candidate did not receive the highest score (which was within 10 points of the highest score), he received the second highest score; therefore, still making him eligible for hire. It was subsequently discovered that there was an informal relationship linking the hiring manager to the selected incumbent. Even though the applicant selected for the position was not the top scoring applicant, it was acceptable under the guidelines for SES positions to hire the less qualified candidate (although this is not a written departmental policy, it is a widely practiced procedure).

What is assuring applicants of SES and SMS positions that they are treated fairly during the entire employment process? The only assurance is the statement printed at the bottom of JOAs: Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. What guidelines are in place to ensure each department is adhering to the compliance of affirmative action/equal employment opportunity standards? These questions help outline the problem: “Is there equal employment opportunity in the Service First initiative?”

The anecdote provided an example of instances where management took advantage of the lack of instructions guiding them in the employment process. These advantages had been granted by the Service First initiative. It had given managers and
supervisors the power to tailor a job announcement at their discretion, citing it would increase accountability (Service First Initiative, n.d.). It is instances such as this one that pose problems for the initiative. Since Service First is devoid of recruitment and selection directives for SES and SMS positions, it leaves agencies to construct and manipulate their own employment policies. Deficient direction from the Initiative may influence malpractice to equal employment opportunity. The purpose of this report is to examine the equal employment opportunity in Florida’s recruitment and selection practices now that Service First has been implemented.

II. BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

There were two main developments that should be examined to understand the history of Florida’s HR system. First, a brief look at the HR system before Service First; then, the development of the initiative was reviewed. Each development plays an important role in the current condition of Florida’s HR system.

Historically, DMS, formerly the Department of Administration, made the policies that were disseminated to the other state agencies. Currently, the State is a decentralized government (Wechsler, 1993). This means that each agency develops their own HR policies, aided by guidelines set by DMS. However, DMS does not govern how each department develops and administers its own policies. In order to streamline the recruitment and selection process, Bush devised the Service First initiative.

Service First begun as a civil service reform plan designed to modernize the State’s HR practices and systems. Governor Bush had underlined a set of principles for
enhancing the civil service: rewarding performances, providing more employment opportunity for state employees, and bestowing greater responsibilities upon supervisors and managers (Service First, n.d.).

To aid in the initiative, Convergys, an HR outsource company, was hired to develop the People First system for candidates to apply for state jobs. This on-line system is set up to screen applicants by asking a series of qualifying questions when they electronically submit an application. These questions are developed by each agency. These questions must be answered in order to submit an on-line state application. Even then, it still was not clear to candidates if they were proficient enough to apply.

The initiative was also designed to protect against discrimination and patronage (n.d.). It kept employees protected from arbitrary dismissal due to patronage, party affiliation, discrimination, disability, or any statutorily protected status (n.d.). Retaining the ability to appeal to the Public Employees Relations Commission any actions that constitute an abuse of the agency head’s sound discretion was an important right of State employees (n.d.).

Simplifying the hiring process was another fundamental aspect of the initiative. Before the enactment of Service First, it took 45 to 60 days to hire a career service employee (n.d.). Now, Governor Bush was hopeful that the length of this process was exponentially reduced, which was predicted to decrease the agencies chances of losing good potential candidates to competing employers. However, the information was not available that could determine if the State had lost potentially good candidates because this initiative.
Prior to the initiative, it was required by the agencies to document excessively the justification of each stage of the hiring process. Collecting the demographic data was also mandatory. All interviews were recorded. The selection process was in writing, each candidate involved in the selection process is documented, and all applicants given consideration must be rated accordingly (Wechsler, 1993). Now, under the new system, only documentation required was the written justification of how the final candidate qualifies for and meets the job requirements. Reduction in bureaucratic hiring process would create administrative savings and greater productivity. Service First is guiding the way State agencies apply their HR policies. It directs everything from hiring procedures to the retirement program.

In the end, Florida was finally able to achieve its goals of delivering effective human resource services. The new system gave agencies the power to develop their own policies and established accountability. It also increased the accountability measures by putting the burden on managers and supervisors. This is so the State can maximize its human resources, while simultaneously optimizing its productivity. These feats were not attainable with the old HR method.

**Literature Review**

In this subsection, works from experts and scholars are examined. The literature discusses regarding civil service reform and its affects on the three management policy options: minimum qualifications, uniform employment standards, and the establishment of a centralized recruitment agency. This literature review offers arguments affirming and opposing the challenges of the policies.
First, the literature provides an interesting concept and debate regarding employment criteria. Particularly in the public sector, minimum qualifications are used as screening devices in personnel selection (Levine et al., 1997). The use of minimum qualifications should be explored with a view toward increased understanding of the personal attributes measured by education and experience (1997). Surprisingly, the development of minimum qualifications for a job opening is not just the work of managers. The derivative of minimum qualifications and their effects stem from the labor markets. In 1957, Gary Becker devised a model that explained the discriminatory effects on the marketplace (Heckman, 1998). There have been erroneous claims made that Becker’s model proposed that market discrimination disappears in the long run (1998). Through his research on detecting discrimination, Heckman admitted, “disparity in market outcomes does not prove discrimination in the market” (1998, p. 101). Michael Sattinger, who also used the unemployment and labor markets and probability, suggests there are passive and active sides to discrimination of employment criteria (1998). Sattinger’s work further suggests that during labor market contraction, an organization tends to apply the passive recruitment technique. This method is used to impose stricter or discriminatory employment criteria due to the increased pool of unemployed applicants (1998).

However, there is an opposition to the passive recruitment method. When the labor markets are in expansion and unemployment rates are low, organizations participate in active recruitment. Applicants faced more equitable employment criteria; however, discrimination during the interview process is most prevalent. This is the result of a decreased pool of applicants due to lower rates of unemployment (1998).
Second, numerous sources are reviewed regarding uniform personnel regulations. Organizations use uniform HR policies and procedures to help with recruitment decision making.

In past, Florida civil service reform provided its employees with common rules affecting elements such as recruitment and selection (Wechsler, 1993). Codes, policies, rules, and laws governing the employment standards are what Konrad and Linnehan (1995) refer to as formalized HRM (human resource management) structures. The objective of formalized HRM structures is to create a personnel decision making process that would ensure merit-based outcomes (1995). The rationale is to eliminate discrimination in order to judge an individual based on his or her achievements “under a veil of ignorance” (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995, p. 789; Glazer, 1988, p. 332). They recognized these HR policies as “identity-blind HR management structures designed to achieve this goal by ensuring that an individual merit is accurately measured, distributing rewards on the basis of merit” (1995, p. 789). Organizations would benefit from the extended equities and may influence perceptions of distributive fairness (Deutsch, 1975; Gilliland, 1993).

These structures are developed with the intention of improving the employment status of protected groups, such as minorities and women. Although the intentions of the policy makers are good, however, other experts believe that stronger interventions may be needed to achieve substantial change (Glasser, 1988). The fact is these formalized HR structures are guided by professionals and policy makers that are themselves biased and imperfect (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). Previous research conducted by Kraiger and Ford (1985 & 1990), Martinko and Gardner (1983), Nieva and Gutek (1980), Pulakos, White, Oppler, and Borman (1989), Oppler, Campbell, Pulakos and Borman (1992), and Ruble,
Cohen, and Ruble (1984) have found that employment decisions regarding women and people of color are prone to bias (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). These biases are known as identity-conscious structures. Experts that agree with this construct believe that an individual’s merit ought to be considered for personnel decision making, in addition to their demographic characteristics (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995). They also suggested that policies referring to an individual’s national origin, race, and gender should definitely be a major factor in the personnel decision making process (1995). Experts such as Blanchard (1989), Clayton and Tangri (1989), and Glasser (1988) affirmed that identity-conscious HR structures were necessary to “remedy current discrimination, to redress past injustices, and to achieve fair and visible representation in leadership positions” (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995, p. 790).

Finally, the following literature proposed the integration of support services, such as HR, as an incentive to increased productivity and cost effectiveness. Organizations use centralized departments to increase productivity all the time. In the past, Florida’s HR system was more centralized with the Department of Administration setting policies and procedures maintaining statewide oversight, coordination, and control (Wechsler, 1993). In 1991, the reform to the Florida’s Career Service System outlined broader job classes, the elimination of unmanageable rules and procedures, greater cooperation between agencies and DMS, and providing agencies increased flexibility to manage their resources as its list of achievements. The theme underlying these goals was that centralized personnel regulations hinder agencies’ ability to manage their human resources. This reform was vital to Florida’s quality of service delivery. The sentiments...
of Florida’s Legislature were to grant greater flexibility in areas such as recruiting and hiring, agencies would enable departments to meet their specific needs (OPPAGA, 1995).

Services such as HR are directly related to an organization’s outcome. When it comes to consolidating HR functions, it becomes an interesting topic for debate. Organizations realize there is a major incentive to centralizing their service support departments. As one expert suggests, “Consolidation makes it easier for a company to attract and employ experts in their fields” (Dzilna, 1999, p. 68). In addition, a centralized department reduces the costs and builds efficiency (1999).

While lower cost and better customer service are both great attributes of a centralized department, there are other factors that ought to be considered. In the effort to achieve centralized productivity “staffs may be streamlined too far, at the same time heaping more responsibilities on those who are still around” (Dzilna, 1999, p. 68). The most prominent effect of centralizing is downsizing. When organizations decide on this option, there is a great possibility of a significant amount of job lose. Another danger in centralizing operations is that it can develop into a department’s head personal domain. When that happens, it loses its focus to serve and can easily be merged into other support service departments during times of trouble (1999).

However, Florida has found that there is a positive attribute to this option. “In many respects Florida already had a decentralized personnel system. The recruitment and selection processes, performance appraisal and training for example, were largely decentralized, giving agencies the freedom to establish and implement their own policies” (Wechsler, 1993, p. 47).
In summary, the literature presented was sufficient in igniting interest for further review of the alternatives to Florida’s personnel system. However, the literature does not provide sufficient assessment and comparison of similar change in other leading governments. Yet, the literature has helped to construct the criteria and critical analyses of the three management policy options.

III. METHODOLOGY & EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Methodology

Information for this report was collected using the following methods:

- Review of applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, planning documents, and standards from the Florida Senate (www.flsenate.gov) and the official State of Florida home page (www.myflorida.com); and

- An analysis of academic literature dated from 1993-2003 from databases such as Academic Index – Current, Academic Universe, ArticleFirst, JSTOR, PsychInfo, and Social Sciences Abstract; and

- Anonymous structured interviews lasting 30 to 45 minutes and telephone contacts (n=10) with recruitment staff from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS), and the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT).

A review of the Service First initiative regarding the employment practices of state agencies is necessary for the purpose of this report. The web site has a complete overview of the initiative as it was written. The Florida Statutes regarding recruitment and selection and federal regulations on equal employment opportunity are also reviewed.

The literature that has been consulted uncovered an abundance of information regarding civil service reform and Service First. It provided insight on why these types
of initiatives are enacted, their purposes, and their evolution in state and federal government.

A structure interview was the third method. Ten recruitment professionals from three major state agencies were personally interviewed using an unapproved format (see Appendix). The respondents from DHSMV and DOT were selected do to the size of their organizations. DMS is where most management policies, such as employment practices and procedures, originate. The respondents from DMS were selected solely on their department’s influence on policies affecting other state agencies hiring practices. The purpose of the interviews was to extract information regarding the opinions of state employees who handle the problem presented by this report first hand.

Evaluative Criteria

Three criteria were used to evaluate the policy options: political feasibility and administrative feasibility. Each criterion was measured on a decision matrix with a ranking scale of 1 to 5 with one being very poor and five being very strong. The analysis based on the information received will determine the scores of the alternatives.

- Political feasibility rates the impact of and support for an alternative. Data sources for political feasibility are from the structured interviews of 10 State recruitment practitioners and academic literature.

- Administrative feasibility demonstrates the agencies’ abilities to effectively employ each alternative as part of their recruitment and selection process. The data sources are academic literature and the anonymous structured interviews with the 10 recruitment professional from DMS, DHSMV, and DOT.

These criteria were selected as representative of the considerations made in the evaluation of the employment process after the implementation of Service First. Other
factors such as effects on equal employment opportunity compliance, the cost associated with resolving the employment problems caused by Service First implementation, and other hiring consequences could be evaluated due to data unavailability, time constraints, and the infancy of the initiative.

A major limitation in this study is getting accurate accounts and proper documentation regarding employment practices. No one wants to be seen as discriminatory; therefore, some of the information (i.e. screening process documentation) presented may be falsified accounts of the process. However, the information was not analyzed since the equal employment opportunity compliance logs were unavailable to be reviewed because the current policy is in its third year, getting in depth information, or long-term range effects, on the success of the initiative was another constraint. Although the restrictions to this report seem extensive, the criteria that were used are sufficient to analyze which alternative is best.

IV. MANAGEMENT POLICY OPTIONS

Section IV explains three alternatives for state agencies for improving their hiring practices such as reinstating minimum qualifications, uniform employment codes, and a centralized employment agency. Political feasibility and administrative feasibility are the criteria are used to assess.

Option 1: Reinstatement of Minimum Qualifications

This option’s main objective is to specifically state the incumbent’s attributes needed to be eligible for recruitment and selection. It is very difficult to determine ineligible candidates if there is not a clear understanding of what the requisites are.
Minimum qualifications are a list of the least amount of proficiencies, expertise, and competencies needed for an incumbent to be successful in the job.

**Political feasibility:** Minimum qualifications were the most widely used components on a JOA. Many organizations still use this technique to recruit and select the best incumbent. The development of the federal government’s new hiring process has caused Florida to enact a similar recruitment and selection system. Minimum qualifications should be explored with a view toward increased understanding of the personal attributes captured by summary measured of education and experience (Levine et al., 1997).

Ten recruitment professionals from DHSMV, DOT, and DMS commented on the importance of minimum qualifications. The DHSMV practitioners indicated that minimum qualifications were a very intricate part of the screening. They are used to determine eligibility and to ultimately pick the best applicant process (personal interviews, December 10, 2004). Now, with KSAs, it has become increasingly difficult to decipher which candidate is best suited for the job. The recruitment professionals from DMS and DOT also agreed that there were an essential part of the hiring process (personal interviews, December 10, 2004).

To summarize, they asserted that the minimum qualifications made it easier to screen applicants and determine eligibility of recommended candidates. All three focus groups voiced concerns regarding the KSAs inability to explicitly state what the hiring managers need in candidates. Furthermore, these departments expressed the confusion KSAs have caused during the hiring process. As a result, the personnel departments are inundated with inquiries from both the hiring manager and applicants alike. According to
the interviews, managers have asked how to word KSAs to fit the needs of the job vacancy (personal interviews, December 10, 2004). Candidates are asking HR personnel to help them determine if their skills match the ones listed on JOAs.

**Administrative Feasibility:** According to the practitioners, in the past, minimum qualifications were very successful in describing exactly what was required without much confusion on both the hiring managers and applicants. There would also need to be a development of systematic procedures for establishing work history validations (Levine et al., 1997). They also agreed that there were virtually no misunderstandings of what was expected to apply when minimum qualification.

In summary, to reinstate minimum qualifications there would have to be a directive from the Governor’s office citing a change in the initiative. This, however, would be an admission of the problems with Service First. Nevertheless, this option could work as a compromise: keep the existing system and change only the vague KSAs to definite minimum qualifications.

**Option 2: Uniform Employment Regulations for All State Positions**

Chapter 110 of the Florida Statutes clearly spells out the hiring practices for the Career Service positions, which include assurance of efficient recruitment advertising and to ensure candidates meet qualifications. The Career Service section has two parts: recruitment and selection. However, the statutes do not mention any guidelines for recruiting and selecting candidates for SES and SMS positions. The statutes gave that authority to each agency. They were to set up employment rules governing the recruitment and selection of SES and SMS. This option proposes giving these job
categories hiring procedures similar to Career Service may make recruiting and selecting SES and SMS personnel more equitable.

This option presents some disadvantages once implemented -- the overhaul of hiring processes for all job classifications. Furthermore, the reform would have to go through the legislative process in order for all job classifications to have the same recruitment and selection guidelines. As previously stated, Career Service positions are protected under a collective bargaining agreement. For that reason, adherence the hiring process required. As a result of the agreement, any unfair employment practices can be grieved. SES and SMS positions are not subject to the same protection; hence, claims regarding unfair employment practices are not warranted. Moreover, there are no recruitment and selection guidelines set for SES and SMS.

Although Option 1 and Option 2 demonstrate similarities, there are inherent distinctions. This option differs from Option 1 because Option 2 entails revamping all hiring processes for all job classifications and assessing equal standards. Option 1 only offers a replacement to a certain procedure in the hiring process.

**Political Feasibility:** The recruitment professionals did not agree with SES and SMS sharing the same recruitment and selection guidelines with Career Service. In the interviews, the respondents recognized the difference between the two job classifications, however, more than half did not see any need to eradicate these differences. One respondent best describes the general consensus by stating, “To give Career Service and SES the same recruitment and selection guidelines would not be an easy job. There are many things to consider, such as collective bargaining agreements, benefits, and grievance procedures. Most state employees don’t want to think about something like
this, especially after PeopleFirst. Currently, the perception is one side has more perks than the other may. To implement this idea would take too much effort and time” (personal interview, December 10, 2004). Yet, experts believe that stronger interventions may be needed to achieve substantial change when implementing a change such as this one (Glasser, 1988).

The suggestion to provide the same guidelines for all job classifications is not necessarily the solution. In order for this to occur, the lines between each job classification have to be erased. Doing this will not only equalize the hiring procedures for SES and SMS, it would also eliminate the benefits of each respective job classification. Though reasons are unknown, no one wants to change the perquisites that are associated with each classification. However, they all agree that there ought to be adjustments, although not specified, made to the hiring practices of SES and SMS more equal.

**Administrative Feasibility:** This option was not a good choice with the interview respondents. As one respondent from DHSMV stated, “implementing this alternative in this agency would mean a complete overhaul in how this department, as well as other state agencies, recruit and select applicants for each job opportunity” (personal interview, December 10, 2004). The respondent went on to say, “Although this may seem like a good idea, this may not be a popular choice for state agencies after the implementation of PeopleFirst. Restructuring the entire employment process would be very disruptive to the employment process (personal interview, December 10, 2004).”

To summarize, the interview results show that designing and incorporating equal hiring procedures is time consuming, unpopular, and highly inefficient. Experts also
suggested that, once implemented, state employees would benefit from the equities (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Gilliland, 1993). For example, a major goal in this option is grouping all state employees in one category. However, selecting this option does not solve the problem. It is difficult to partake in the arduous task of composing all new employment regulations for all job classifications.

**Option 3: A Centralized State Employment Agency**

Presently, the statutes have left it up to the individual departments to design their own policies regarding hiring candidates for SES and SMS positions. Having a centralized agency revise and/or developing equitable employment practices may lead to better compliance with AA/EEO regulations. By encouraging fair hiring procedures through one entity, the State can ensure its applicants the opportunity of an equitable pre-employment process.

**Political Feasibility:** Governments, as well as other organizations, centralize service departments in order to be more efficient with productivity (Dzilna, 1999). When interviewed, participants’ comments regarding this option varied. Four of the 10 of the professionals liked the idea of a centralized administration of policies; however, departments do enjoy the flexibility of tailoring policies to suit their agency. This option is widely used by many states such as California, Texas, and Alabama, as well as the federal government. If this option selected, DMS would be the designated centralized agency. Therefore, Option 3 will not help each agency in their hiring practices because it will not allow each agency to design policies that will fit their needs.

**Administrative Feasibility:** Modern public administration theory is more favorable to decentralization (Coleman, Brudney, & Kellough, 1998). All policy development,
administration, and enforcement would revert back to DMS. In the effort to achieve centralized productivity “staffs may be streamlined too far, at the same time heaping more responsibilities on those who are still around” (Dzilna, 1999, p. 68).

The respondents were not in favor of this alternative, citing autonomy as a major factor. As one respondent noted, “agencies are comfortable with incorporating their own procedures and processes that are in accordance to the guidelines developed by DMS. To delegate DMS as the central agency for the employment process could lead to an administrative nightmare” (personal interview, December 10, 2004). This respondent’s comment summarized the sentiments of all 10 recruitment professionals.

Summarily, if this alternative is considered commissions, taskforces, and committees are usually formed with experts debating over the transition. These group meetings can be lengthy and sometimes unsuccessful in reaching an agreement the implementation process. At this time, it is not advisable to make another huge transition.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The report presented the reinstatement of minimum qualifications, designing and incorporating Career Service recruitment and selection guidelines into SES and SMS, or establishing one organization to develop a universal hiring standard for the state were the three policy alternatives. They were offered as possible solution to improving equal employment opportunity for SES and SMS. Each option was evaluated based on political and administrative feasibility. Table 1 summarizes the results.
### Table 1 – Summary of Alternatives and Evaluative Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Political Feasibility</th>
<th>Administrative Feasibility</th>
<th>Total Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinstall Minimum Qualifications</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Hiring Standards</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMS as Centralized Agency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ranking Scale: 1 to 5 with one being very low and five being very high

All three of the alternatives could improve the pre-employment standards for SES and SMS. Each option has advantages and disadvantages in the three ranking criteria. One option has a slight advantage when all of the scores are tabulated. This option is the reinstatement of minimum qualifications.

Reinstatement of minimum qualifications received a high score for both political and administrative feasibility. The data show that the respondents and academic literature generally felt that minimum qualifications were a better tool in the recruitment and selection stage of employment. There is also hardly any training associated with this
option. Moreover, no extra work is needed to compose a job opportunity announcement when there is a substitution.

Designing and incorporating Career Service recruitment and selection guidelines into SES and SMS -- Option 2 -- received a moderate score for the political feasibility criterion. The respondents tended not to fare well with everyone sharing the same types of perquisites and special benefits that are unique for each job classification. Applying the same hiring standards for SES and SMS that are exclusive to Career Service will not be widely accepted by the respondents.

Establishing one organization for the State received a score of one for political feasibility. The rating was low due to lack of acceptance of government dictating work paths. The assessment of the administrative feasibility yielded the lowest score of one. Executing this criterion implies a return to the previous personnel policy. This would negate the progress of this State’s new civil service reform.

In conclusion, Option 1, with its combined total of 15, was highly recommended as the best alternative in this problem. It received the highest score, which demonstrated a high overall political feasibility rating and its ability to be successful in administrative procedures. It had proven to be the most desirable choice.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Service First/Recruitment Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer the following questions regarding the State’s recruitment and selection policies, practices, and procedures.

1. Since the enactment of Service First, how has its policies and mandates helped or improved your department’s efforts to recruit and select from a diverse pool of applicants?

2. Because of Broadbanding, minimum qualifications have been replaced by knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) on a job opportunity announcement/requisition. Has the new procedure helped or improved recruiting efforts? How? Or, has the implementation of KSAs caused applicants confusion because of the breadth of KSAs?

3. Do you think minimum qualifications should be reinstated in requisitions/job opportunity announcements?

4. A) How frequently is your department using the new People First system (check the appropriate box)?
   - Has not used People First for any recruitment (if you check this box, skip to #4)
   - Has used People First for recruiting some positions (if you check this box, answer part B)
   - Uses People First for recruiting all positions (if you check this box, answer part C)

   B) What are the positions that have been filled by the People First method? How does it compare to the department’s old method of recruitment?

   C) Has using People First improved the quantity and quality of diverse applicants? (supplying EEO statistics would be helpful, if you cannot provide that information, your personal comments would be appreciated)

5. Does the lack of guidelines for the recruitment and selection of Select Exempt Service (SES) and Senior Management Service (SMS) affect your agency’s hiring process?

6. If so, do you think that incorporating the recruitment and selection guidelines of Career Service ought to be shared by SES and SMS?

7. What is your agency’s recruitment and selection policy for SES and SMS?

8. Do you think all State’s hiring policies ought to be designed by the Department of Management Services only?

9. Please fill free to use this section to add any additional comments on this subject. Thanks for your assistance.
About the Author

Samia Eason (B. A. in public administration and psychology, University of Central Florida; MPA candidate, Florida State University) has been employed with public organizations in various clerical and professional capacities. Ms. Eason is interested in human resource management and alternative dispute resolution processes. She is currently a human resources professional for a major State agency.