

June 2003

FEDERAL UNIFORMED POLICE

Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area





Highlights of [GAO-03-658](#), a report to Congressional Requesters.

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Why GAO Did This Study

Officials at several federal uniformed police forces in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area have raised concerns that disparities in pay and retirement benefits have caused their police forces to experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining officers. These concerns have increased during the past year with the significant expansion of the Federal Air Marshal Program, which has created numerous relatively high-paying job opportunities for existing federal uniformed police officers and reportedly has lured many experienced officers from their uniformed police forces. GAO's objectives were to (1) determine the differences that exist among selected federal uniformed police forces regarding entry-level pay, retirement benefits, and types of duties; (2) provide information on the differences in turnover rates among these federal uniformed police forces, including where officers who separated from the police forces went and the extent to which human capital flexibilities were available and used to address turnover; and (3) provide information on possible difficulties police forces may have faced recruiting officers and the extent to which human capital flexibilities were available to help these forces recruit officers.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-658.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Richard M. Stana, (202) 512-8777, or stanar@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

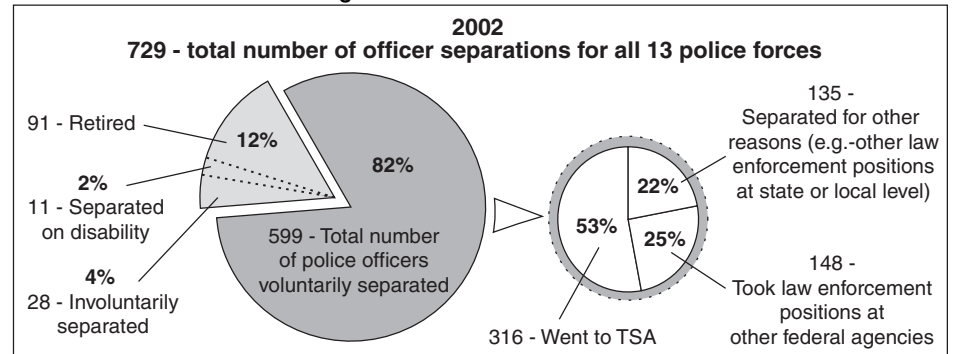
During fiscal year 2002, entry-level police officer salaries varied by more than \$10,000 across the 13 police forces, from a high of \$39,427 per year to a low of \$28,801 per year. Four of the 13 police forces received federal law enforcement retirement benefits. Between October 1, 2002, and April 1, 2003, 12 of the 13 police forces received pay increases, which narrowed the pay gap for entry-level officers at some of the 13 forces. Officials at the 13 police forces reported that while officers performed many of the same types of duties, the extent to which they performed specialized functions varied.

Total turnover at the 13 police forces nearly doubled (from 375 to 729) between fiscal years 2001 and 2002. Additionally, during fiscal year 2002, 8 of the 13 police forces experienced their highest annual turnover rates over the 6-year period, from fiscal years 1997 through 2002. Sizable differences existed in the turnover rates among the 13 federal uniformed police forces during fiscal year 2002. The availability and use of human capital flexibilities to retain employees, such as retention allowances, varied.

GAO found that the increase in the number of separations (354) across the 13 police forces between fiscal years 2001 and 2002 almost equaled the number of officers (316) who left their forces to join the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Given that the buildup in staffing for TSA's Federal Air Marshal Program has been substantially completed, the increase in turnover experienced in fiscal year 2002 at 12 of the 13 police forces may have been a one-time occurrence.

Officials at 9 of 13 police forces reported at least some difficulty recruiting officers. However, none of the police forces used important human capital flexibilities, such as recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments, during fiscal year 2002.

Fiscal Year 2002 Turnover Among the 13 Police Forces



Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 police forces.

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Abbreviations

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FERS	Federal Employees Retirement System
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NIH	National Institutes of Health
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
TSA	Transportation Security Administration

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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

June 13, 2003

The Honorable George V. Voinovich
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce, and
the District of Columbia
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Dan Burton
The Honorable Dave Weldon, M.D.
House of Representatives

Recent events, including the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, have highlighted the importance of ensuring proper security at federal facilities. As the headquarters location for many federal agencies, the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area is home to numerous federal uniformed police forces. Officials at some of these police forces have raised concerns that disparities in pay and retirement benefits have caused their police forces to experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining officers. These concerns increased with the significant expansion of the Federal Air Marshal Program, which created numerous relatively high-paying job opportunities for existing federal uniformed police officers and reportedly lured many experienced officers from their uniformed police forces.

This report responds to your request that we review recruitment and retention issues at selected federal uniformed police forces in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).¹ As agreed with your offices, our objectives for this report were to (1) determine the differences that exist among these federal uniformed police forces regarding entry-level pay, retirement benefits, and types of duties; (2) provide information on the differences in turnover rates among these federal uniformed police forces, including where officers who separated from the police forces

¹The Washington MSA, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, includes the District of Columbia and many adjacent counties and cities. However, the Washington MSA does not include Baltimore, Annapolis, or Howard County. For a full list of all the cities and counties included in the Washington MSA, see appendix I.

went and the extent to which human capital flexibilities² were available and used by the police forces to address turnover; and (3) provide information on the possible difficulties police forces may have experienced in recruiting police officers and the extent to which human capital flexibilities were available to help these police forces to recruit officers.

As agreed with your offices, we limited the police forces in our review to the 13 federal uniformed police forces with 50 or more officers in the Washington MSA as of September 30, 2001, because we wanted to focus on the forces with the largest number of officers. To address our objectives, we interviewed officials from and reviewed documents provided by the following federal uniformed police forces: Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Police, Federal Protective Service, Government Printing Office Police, Library of Congress Police, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Police, Pentagon Force Protection Agency, Supreme Court Police, U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Mint Police, U.S. Park Police, U.S. Postal Service Police,³ and the U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division. We also interviewed officials at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). We developed a data collection instrument (survey) regarding recruitment and retention and distributed the survey to the 13 federal uniformed police forces. We analyzed the results and followed-up with agency officials when data were incomplete or inconsistent. We performed our work in Washington, D.C.; Maryland; and Virginia between August 2002 and May 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results in Brief

Entry-level pay and retirement benefits varied significantly among the 13 federal police forces as of September 30, 2002. Entry-level police officer salaries varied by more than \$10,000 across the 13 police forces.⁴ At

²In broad terms, human capital flexibilities represent the policies and practices that an agency has the authority to implement in managing its workforce to achieve its goals. These flexibilities can include retention allowances, recruitment bonuses, tuition reimbursement, on-site childcare facilities, and performance-based awards, among others.

³According to U.S. Postal Service officials, the official name of their police force is the U.S. Postal Service Security Force. For this report, the U.S. Postal Service Police refers to the U.S. Postal Service Security Force.

⁴Throughout the report, all salary figures are as of September 30, 2002, unless otherwise noted.

\$39,427 per year, the U.S. Capitol Police, Library of Congress Police, and Supreme Court Police forces had the highest starting salaries for entry-level officers, while entry-level officers at the NIH Police and Federal Protective Service received the lowest at \$28,801 per year. The annual salaries for officers at the remaining 8 police forces ranged from \$29,917 to \$38,695 per year. However, between October 1, 2002, and April 1, 2003, 12 of the 13 police forces (all except the U.S. Postal Service Police), received pay increases, which narrowed the pay gap for entry-level officers at some of the 13 forces. In addition, officers at 4 of the 13 police forces (U.S. Capitol Police, Supreme Court Police, U.S. Park Police, and Secret Service Uniformed Division) received federal law enforcement retirement benefits, which allowed them to retire at age 50 with a minimum of 20 years of service and required retirement at age 57. Officers at the remaining 9 police forces received standard federal employee retirement benefits.⁵ Officials at the 13 police forces reported that officers on these forces performed many of the same types of duties, such as protecting people and property and conducting entrance and exit screenings.⁶ However, police force officials noted that the extent to which officers performed specialized functions, such as K-9 and SWAT, varied.

Total turnover at the 13 police forces nearly doubled from fiscal years 2001 to 2002. Additionally, during fiscal year 2002, 8 of the 13 police forces experienced their highest annual turnover rates over the 6-year period, from fiscal years 1997 through 2002. During fiscal year 2002, significant differences existed in the turnover rates among the 13 federal uniformed police forces. Turnover ranged from a low of 11 percent for the Library of Congress Police to a high of 58 percent at the NIH Police. The turnover rates for the remaining 11 police forces ranged from 13 percent to 41 percent. Of the 729 officers who separated from the 13 police forces in fiscal year 2002, 599 (about 82 percent) voluntarily separated.⁷ Of these 599 officers, 316 (about 53 percent) went to TSA—nearly all (313 of 316) to become Federal Air Marshals where they were able to earn higher pay,

⁵To retire with full standard federal retirement benefits, employees generally must be at least between ages 55 and 57 with 30 years of service. The age at which they are eligible to retire with unreduced retirement benefits depends on the year of their birth and the specific retirement plan they are covered by (the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employees Retirement System). Employees age 60 can retire with 20 years of service; and employees age 62 can retire with 5 years of service.

⁶We did not attempt to assess the relative difficulty of performing these duties.

⁷For this report, voluntary separation includes leaving for any reason other than retirement, disability, or involuntary separation, such as death, reduction-in-force, or misconduct.

federal law enforcement retirement benefits, and a type of pay premium for unscheduled duty equaling 25 percent of their base salary. Additionally, 148 officers (about 25 percent) took other federal law enforcement positions; 32 officers (about 5 percent) took nonlaw enforcement positions; and 51 officers (about 9 percent) took positions in state or local law enforcement or separated to, among other things, continue their education.⁸ About 65 percent of the officers who voluntarily separated from the 13 police forces during fiscal year 2002 had fewer than 5 years of service on their police forces. While officials from the 13 forces reported a number of reasons that officers had separated, including to obtain better pay and/or benefits at other police forces, less overtime, and greater responsibility, we were unable to discern any clear patterns between employee turnover and pay. That is, turnover varied significantly among police forces that had similar pay for entry-level officers. The use of human capital flexibilities to reduce turnover varied among the 13 police forces. For example, 3 of the 13 police forces reported that they paid retention allowances ranging from about \$1,000 to \$4,200 during fiscal year 2002.

Officials from 9 of the 13 police forces reported that they were experiencing at least a little or some difficulty recruiting police officers. Officials at 4 of these police forces (Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police, the FBI Police, Federal Protective Service, and NIH Police) reported that they were having a great or very great deal of difficulty recruiting officers and cited pay as a major contributor to their recruitment difficulties. Officials at 5 police forces reported that they were having difficulty recruiting officers to a little or some extent or to a moderate extent. Conversely, officials at 4 of the 13 police forces (Library of Congress Police, Supreme Court Police, U.S. Mint Police, and U.S. Postal Service Police) reported that they were not having any difficulty recruiting officers. Although many of the police forces reported facing recruitment difficulties, none of them used human capital recruitment flexibilities, such as recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments, in fiscal year 2002.

We provided a draft of this report to officials representing each of the 13 federal uniformed police forces included in our review, along with OPM, and received comments from 12 of the 13 police forces and OPM. Most of

⁸Officials were unable to determine where the remaining 52 (about 9 percent) of the voluntarily separated officers went.

the police forces provided technical comments, which were included as appropriate. The U.S. Secret Service and OPM wrote detailed comments that are discussed in our Agency Comments section on pages 24 and 25.

Background

Although the specific duties police officers perform may vary among police forces, federal uniformed police officers are generally responsible for providing security and safety to people and property within and sometimes surrounding federal buildings. There are a number of federal uniformed police forces operating in the Washington MSA, of which 13 had 50 or more officers as of September 30, 2001. Table 1 shows the 13 federal uniformed police forces included in our review and the number of officers in each of the police forces as of September 30, 2002.

Table 1: Federal Uniformed Police Forces with 50 or More Officers Stationed in the Washington MSA

Department	Uniformed police force	Number of officers on-board as of September 30, 2002
Executive branch		
Department of Defense	Pentagon Force Protection Agency	259
Department of the Interior	U.S. Park Police	439
Department of Justice	Federal Bureau of Investigation Police	173
Department of the Treasury	Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police	120
	U.S. Mint Police	52
	U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division	1,072
General Services Administration	Federal Protective Service	140
Department of Health and Human Services	National Institutes of Health Police	53
U.S. Postal Service	U.S. Postal Service Police	109
Legislative branch		
Government Printing Office	Government Printing Office Police	52
Library of Congress	Library of Congress Police	129
U.S. Capitol Police	U.S. Capitol Police	1,278
Judicial branch		
Supreme Court	Supreme Court Police	122
Total		3,998

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

On November 25, 2002, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 was enacted into law.⁹ The act, among other things, restructured parts of the executive branch of the federal government to better address the threat to the United

⁹P.L. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135 (2002).

States posed by terrorism. The act established a new Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which includes two uniformed police forces within the scope of our review—the Federal Protective Service and the Secret Service Uniformed Division. These police forces were formerly components of the General Services Administration and the Department of the Treasury, respectively. Another component of DHS is the TSA, which protects the nation’s transportation systems. TSA, which was formerly a component of the Department of Transportation, includes the Federal Air Marshal Service, which is designed to provide protection against hijacking and terrorist attacks on domestic and international airline flights. The Federal Air Marshal Program increased significantly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, resulting in the need for TSA to recruit many Air Marshals during fiscal year 2002. By fiscal year 2003, the buildup in the Federal Air Marshal Program had been substantially completed. Federal Air Marshals are not limited to the grade and pay step structure of the federal government’s General Schedule. As a result, TSA has been able to offer air marshal recruits higher compensation and more flexible benefit packages than many other federal police forces.

Federal uniformed police forces operate under various compensation systems. Some federal police forces are covered by the General Schedule pay system and others are covered by different pay systems authorized by various laws.¹⁰ Since 1984, all new federal employees have been covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).¹¹ Federal police forces

¹⁰The General Schedule system consists of 22 broad occupational groups. Each group includes separate series that represent occupations in that group. The police series (GS-0083) is within the Miscellaneous Occupations group. OPM defines the police series as positions in which the primary duties are the performance or supervision of law enforcement work in the preservation of the peace; the prevention, detection, and investigation of crimes; the arrest or apprehension of violators; and the provision of assistance to citizens in emergency situations, including the protection of civil rights.

¹¹FERS benefits are derived from three components: an annuity, a thrift savings plan, and Social Security. The basic annuity provided under FERS is computed on the basis of (1) years of service and (2) the 3 years of service with the highest annual salaries (high 3). Congress intended that the second component of FERS—the Thrift Savings Plan—be a key element of FERS. The Thrift Savings Plan provides for an employer contribution, including an automatic contribution of 1 percent of salary, along with a matching contribution of up to 5 percent. Social Security benefits make up the third component of the retirement package. The Civil Service Retirement System annuity, which applies to individuals hired prior to January 1, 1984, is a stand-alone annuity based on age and years of service.

provide either standard federal retirement benefits or federal law enforcement retirement benefits.¹²

Studies of employee retention indicate that turnover is a complex and multifaceted problem. People leave their jobs for a variety of reasons. Compensation is often cited as a primary reason for employee turnover. However, nonpay factors, such as age, job tenure, job satisfaction, and job location, may also affect individuals' decisions to leave their jobs.

During recent years, the federal government has implemented many human capital flexibilities to help agencies attract and retain sufficient numbers of high-quality employees to complete their missions. Human capital flexibilities can include actions related to areas such as recruitment, retention, competition, position classification, incentive awards and recognition, training and development, and work-life policies. We have stated in recent reports that the effective, efficient, and transparent use of human capital flexibilities must be a key component of agency efforts to address human capital challenges.¹³ The tailored use of such flexibilities for recruiting and retaining high-quality employees is an important cornerstone of our model of strategic human capital management.¹⁴

Scope and Methodology

To address our objectives, we identified federal uniformed police forces with 50 or more officers in the Washington MSA—13 in all. Specifically, we reviewed OPM data to determine the executive branch federal uniformed police forces with 50 or more police officers in the Washington MSA. We reviewed a prior report issued by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics and our prior reports to determine the judicial and

¹²Under FERS, officers receiving federal law enforcement retirement benefits receive 1.7 percent of their high 3 multiplied by the first 20 years of service and 1 percent multiplied by each year of service greater than 20 years. Thus, a police officer who retires at age 50 with 20 years of service would receive 34 percent of the officer's high 3. After 30 years of service, the benefit would be 44 percent of the officer's high 3. Officers retiring under FERS would also receive benefits from their Thrift Savings Plan accounts and Social Security.

¹³U.S. General Accounting Office, *High Risk Series: Strategic Human Capital Management*, GAO-03-120 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 2003).

¹⁴U.S. General Accounting Office, *A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management, Exposure Draft*, GAO-02-373SP (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002).

legislative branches' federal uniformed police forces with 50 or more police officers in the Washington MSA.

In addressing each of the objectives, we interviewed officials responsible for human capital issues at each of the 13 police forces and obtained documents on recruitment and retention issues. Using this information, we created a survey and distributed it to the 13 police forces to obtain information on (1) entry-level officer pay and benefits, types of officer duties, and minimum entry-level officer qualifications; (2) officer turnover rates¹⁵ and the availability and use of human capital flexibilities to retain officers; and (3) difficulties in recruiting officers, and the availability and use of human capital flexibilities to improve recruiting. We reviewed and analyzed the police forces' responses for completeness and accuracy and followed-up on any missing or unclear responses with appropriate officials.

Where possible, we verified the data using OPM's Central Personnel Data File.¹⁶ In reviewing duties performed by police officers at the 13 police forces, we relied on information provided by police force officials and did not perform a detailed analysis of the differences in duties and responsibilities. Additionally, due to resource limitations, we did not survey officers who separated from the police forces to determine their reasons for leaving.¹⁷ We obtained this information from officials at the police forces. Although some of the police forces have police officers detailed at locations throughout the country, the data in this report are only for officers stationed in the Washington MSA. Therefore, these data are not projectable nationwide.

¹⁵To calculate the turnover rates, we divided the total number of police officers who separated from the police forces by the average of the number of officers on-board at the beginning of the fiscal year and the number of officers on-board at the end of the fiscal year. For each police force, we included as separations both those who left the police force, as well as those who transferred from the police officer series (GS-0083) to other job series within the force.

¹⁶The Central Personnel Data File is a database that contains individual records for most executive branch federal employees and is the primary governmentwide source for information on federal employees.

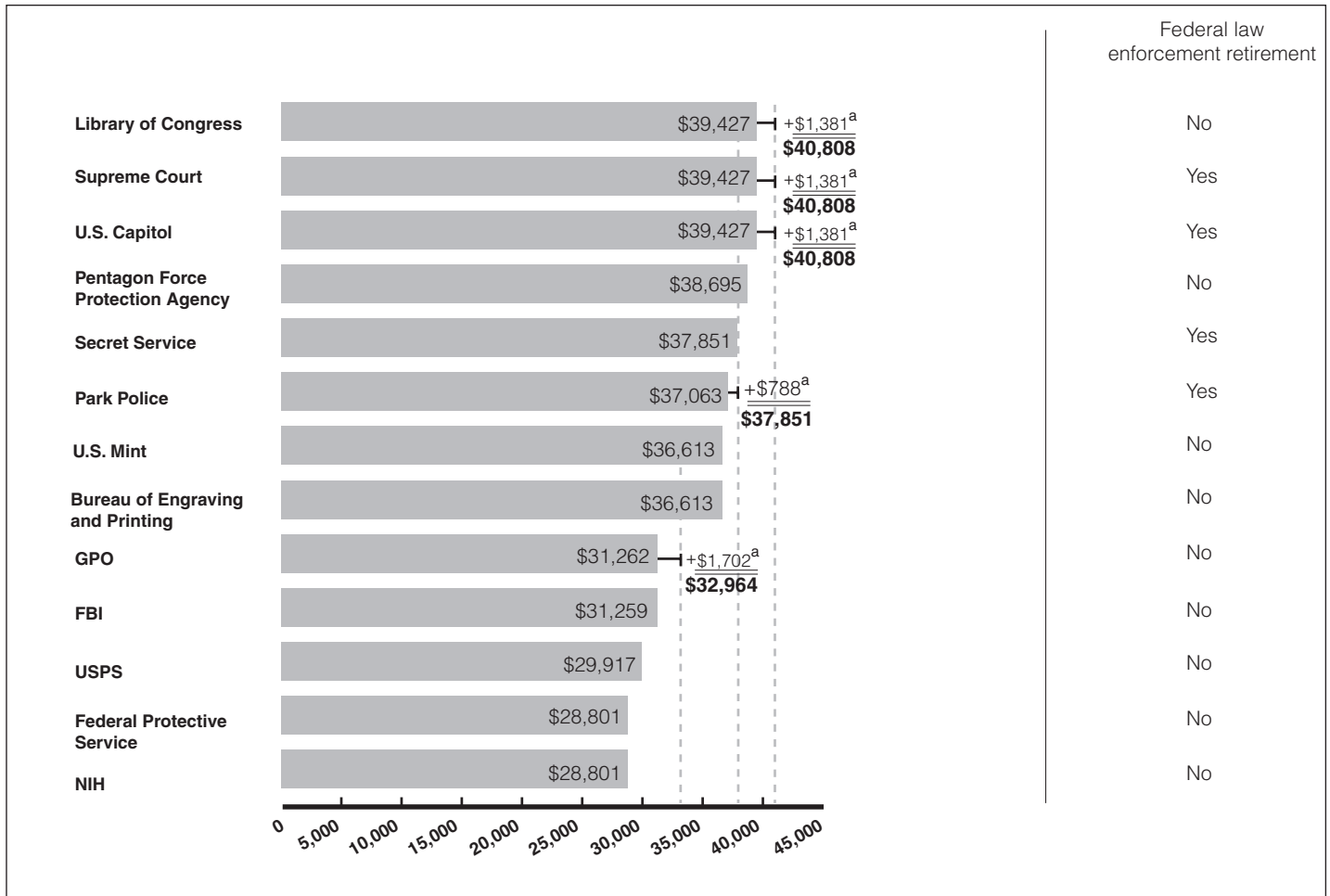
¹⁷We did not have the resources to find and confirm the addresses of all 599 officers who voluntarily separated from the 13 police forces included in our review, which would have been necessary to conduct a survey.

Entry-Level Pay and Benefits Varied among the Police Forces

Entry-level pay and retirement benefits varied widely across the 13 police forces. Annual pay for entry-level police officers ranged from \$28,801 to \$39,427, as of September 30, 2002. Officers at 4 of the 13 police forces received federal law enforcement retirement benefits, while officers at the remaining 9 police forces received standard federal employee retirement benefits. According to officials, all 13 police forces performed many of the same types of general duties, such as protecting people and property and screening people and materials entering and/or exiting buildings under their jurisdictions. Eleven of the 13 police forces had specialized teams and functions, such as K-9 and/or SWAT. The minimum qualification requirements and the selection processes were generally similar among most of the 13 police forces.

At \$39,427 per year, the U.S. Capitol Police, Library of Congress Police, and Supreme Court Police forces had the highest starting salaries for entry-level officers, while entry-level officers at the NIH Police and Federal Protective Service received the lowest starting salaries at \$28,801 per year. The salaries for officers at the remaining 8 police forces ranged from \$29,917 to \$38,695. Entry-level officers at 5 of the 13 police forces received an increase in pay, ranging from \$788 to \$1,702, upon successful completion of basic training. Four of the 13 police forces received federal law enforcement retirement benefits and received among the highest starting salaries, ranging from \$37,063 to \$39,427. Figure 1 provides a comparison of entry-level officer pay and retirement benefits at the 13 police forces.

Figure 1: Pay for Entry-level Officers and Retirement Benefits for Each of the 13 Police Forces with 50 or More Officers Stationed in the Washington MSA as of September 30, 2002



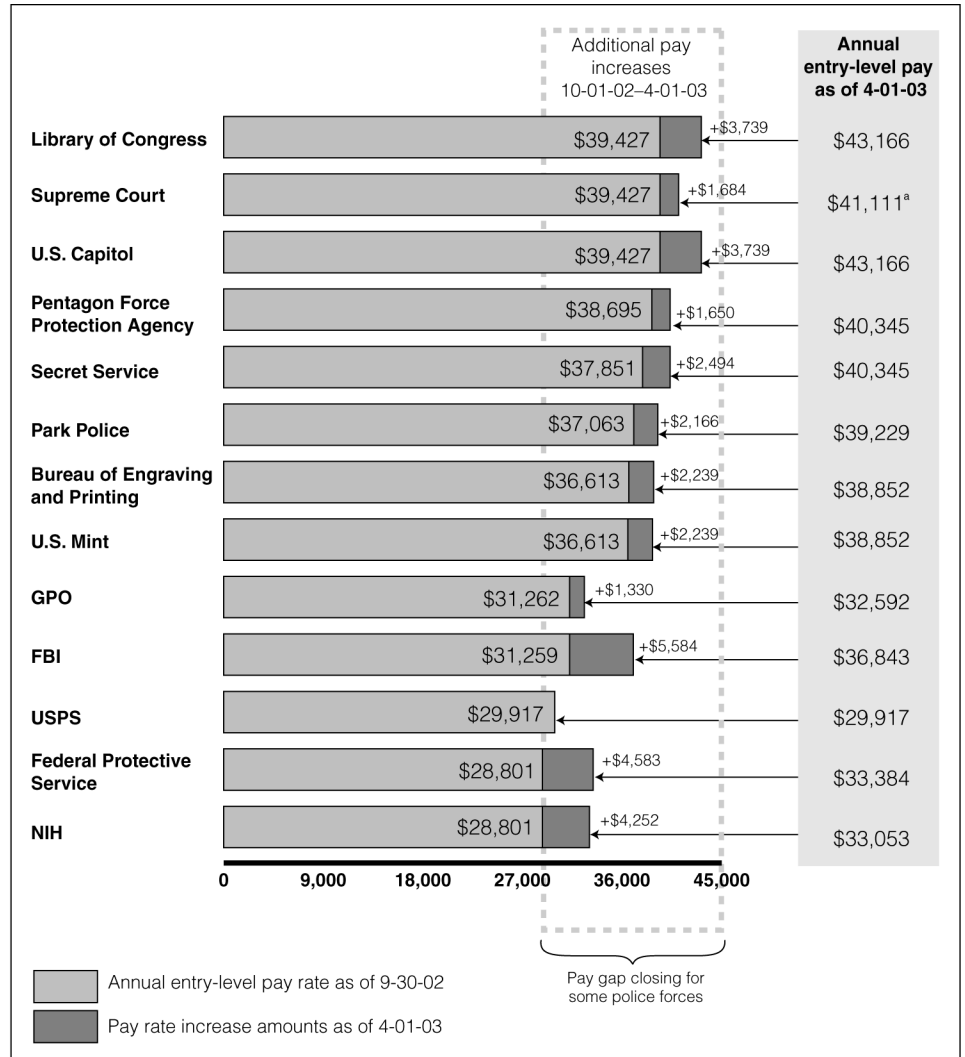
Source: GAO analysis of pay data provided by the 13 police forces.

^aPay increase after successful completion of basic training.

Entry-level officers at 12 of the 13 police forces (all but the U.S. Postal Service Police) received increases in their starting salaries between October 1, 2002, and April 1, 2003. Entry-level officers at three of the four police forces (FBI Police, Federal Protective Service, and NIH Police) with the lowest entry-level salaries as of September 30, 2002, received raises of \$5,584, \$4,583, and \$4,252, respectively, during the period ranging from October 1, 2002 through April 1, 2003. In addition, entry-level officers at

both the U.S. Capitol Police and Library of Congress Police—two of the highest paid forces—also received salary increases of \$3,739 during the same time period. These pay raises received by entry-level officers from October 1, 2002, through April 1, 2003, narrowed the entry-level pay gap for some of the 13 forces. For example, as of September 30, 2002, entry-level officers at the FBI Police received a salary \$8,168 less than an entry-level officer at the U.S. Capitol Police. However, as of April 1, 2003, the pay gap between entry-level officers at the two forces had narrowed to \$6,323. Figure 2 provides information on pay increases that entry-level officers received from October 1, 2002, through April 1, 2003, along with entry-level officer pay rates as of April 1, 2003.

Figure 2: Fiscal Year 2003 Pay Increases for Entry-Level Officers for Each of the 13 Police Forces with 50 or More Officers Stationed in the Washington MSA as of April 1, 2003



Source: GAO analysis of pay data provided by the 13 police forces.

^aIn late April 2003, Supreme Court Police officers were granted a pay increase retroactive to October 1, 2002. This pay increase brought the entry-level pay of Supreme Court officers to the same levels as those of the Capitol Police and Library of Congress Police.

Officers at the 13 police forces reportedly performed many of the same types of duties, such as protecting people and property, patrolling the grounds on foot, and conducting entrance and exit screenings. Police force officials also reported that officers at all of the police forces had the

authority to make arrests. Table 2 displays the types of duties performed by officers at each of the 13 police forces.

Table 2: Types of Duties Performed by Officers at Each of the 13 Police Forces Located in the Washington MSA

Uniformed police force	Protection of people and property	Patrol in vehicle	Patrol on foot	Patrol outside agency boundary	Entrance and/or exit screening	Crowd control	Arrests
Library of Congress	•		•		•	•	•
Supreme Court	•	•	•		•	•	•
U.S. Capitol	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Secret Service	•	•	•	^a	•	•	•
Park Police	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Mint	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Government Printing Office	•	•	•		•		•
Federal Bureau of Investigation	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Postal Service	•	•	•		•		•
Federal Protective Service	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
National Institutes of Health	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Total	13	12	13	8	13	11	13

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

^aThe Secret Service noted that the Uniformed Division has full police powers in Washington, D.C., and that it further has the authority to perform its protective duties throughout the United States.

Although there are similarities in the general duties, there were differences among the police forces with respect to the extent to which they performed specialized functions. Table 3 shows that 11 of the 13 police forces reported that they performed at least one specialized function; 2 police forces (Government Printing Office Police and U.S. Postal Service Police) reported that they did not perform specialized functions.

Table 3: Specialized Functions Performed by Officers at Each of the 13 Police Forces

Uniformed police force	K-9	SWAT	Criminal investigation	Chemical/biological/hazmat	Traffic	Bicycle	Other
Library of Congress			•				
Supreme Court	•			•			•
U.S. Capitol	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Secret Service	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Park Police	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bureau of Engraving and Printing					•	•	
U.S. Mint		•	•		•	•	
Government Printing Office							
Federal Bureau of Investigation	•	•	•	•	•		•
U.S. Postal Service							
Federal Protective Service	•		•	•	•	•	•
National Institutes of Health	•		•	•	•	•	•
Total	8	6	9	8	9	8	8

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

The minimum qualification requirements and the selection processes were generally similar among most of the 13 police forces. As part of the selection process, all 13 police forces required new hires to have successfully completed an application, an interview(s), a medical examination, a background investigation, and a drug test. Each force also had at least one additional requirement, such as a security clearance or physical fitness evaluation. The U.S. Postal Service Police was the only force that did not require a high school diploma or prior law enforcement experience. For additional information on qualification requirements and the selection process for the 13 police forces, see appendix IV.

Sizable Differences in Turnover Rates among the 13 Police Forces

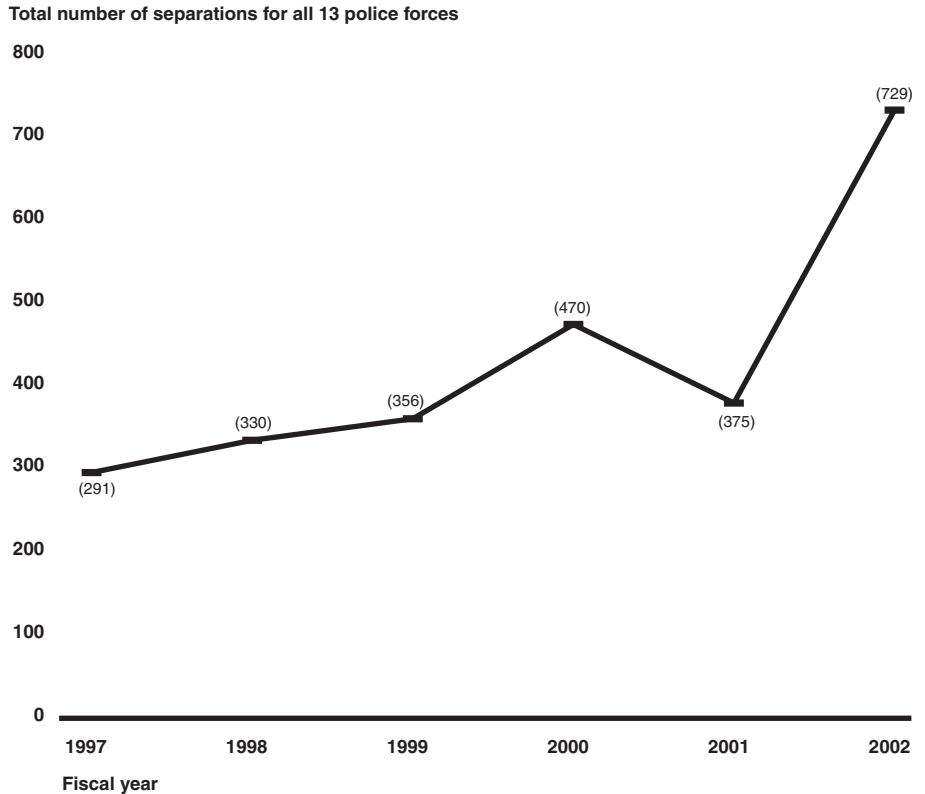
Total turnover at the 13 police forces nearly doubled from fiscal years 2001 to 2002. Additionally, during fiscal year 2002, 8 of the 13 police forces experienced their highest annual turnover rates over the 6-year period, from fiscal years 1997 through 2002. There were sizable differences in turnover rates among the 13 police forces during fiscal year 2002. NIH Police reported the highest turnover rate at 58 percent. The turnover rates for the remaining 12 police forces ranged from 11 percent to 41 percent. Of the 729 officers who separated from the 13 police forces in fiscal year 2002, about 82 percent (599), excluding retirements, voluntarily separated.

About 53 percent (316) of the 599 officers who voluntarily separated from the police forces in fiscal year 2002 went to TSA.¹⁸ Additionally, about 65 percent of the officers who voluntarily separated from the 13 police forces during fiscal year 2002 had fewer than 5 years of service on their police forces.

The total number of separations at all 13 police forces nearly doubled (from 375 to 729) between fiscal years 2001 and 2002. Turnover increased at all but 1 of the police forces (Library of Congress Police) over this period. The most significant increases in turnover occurred at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police (200 percent) and the Secret Service Uniformed Division (about 152 percent). In addition, during fiscal year 2002, 8 of the 13 police forces experienced their highest annual turnover rates over the 6-year period, from fiscal years 1997 through 2002. Figure 3 displays the total number of separations for the 13 police forces over the 6-year period.

¹⁸Of the 316 officers who went to TSA, 313 accepted law enforcement positions and 3 accepted nonlaw enforcement positions.

Figure 3: Total Number of Separations for 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA during Fiscal Years 1997-2002



Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 forces.

The turnover rates at the 13 police forces ranged from 11 percent at the Library of Congress Police to 58 percent at the NIH Police in fiscal year 2002. In addition to the NIH Police, 3 other police forces had turnover rates of 25 percent or greater during fiscal year 2002. The U.S. Mint Police reported the second highest turnover rate at 41 percent, followed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police at 27 percent and the Secret Service Uniformed Division at 25 percent. Table 4 shows that at each of the 13 police forces, turnover was overwhelmingly due to voluntary separations—about 18 percent (130) of turnover was due to retirements, disability, and involuntarily separations.

Table 4: Fiscal Year 2002 Turnover Rates and Separations Data for Each of the 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

Uniformed police force	Turnover rate (in percent)	Retirements^a	Disability separations	Voluntary separations	Involuntary separations	Total separations
Library of Congress	11	5	0	9	0	14
Supreme Court	16	3	0	14	0	17
U.S. Capitol	13	10	1	143	6	160
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	13	4	1	25	3	33
Secret Service	25	39	3	234	1	277
Park Police	13	12	3	36	4	55
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	27	1	1	32	2	36
U.S. Mint	41	0	0	21	1	22
Government Printing Office	16	2	1	2	3	8
Federal Bureau of Investigation	17	1	0	30	1	32
U.S. Postal Service	14	7	1	7	1	16
Federal Protective Service	19	7	0	21	1	29
National Institutes of Health	58	0	0	25	5	30
Total		91	11	599	28	729

Source: GAO analysis of turnover data provided the 13 police forces.

^aIncludes both mandatory and voluntary retirements.

There was no clear pattern evident between employee pay and turnover rates during fiscal year 2002. For example, while some police forces with relatively highly paid entry-level officers such as the Library of Congress Police (11 percent) and the Supreme Court Police (13 percent) had relatively low turnover rates, other police forces with relatively highly paid entry-level officers such as the U.S. Mint Police (41 percent), Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police (27 percent), and Secret Service Uniformed Division (25 percent) experienced significantly higher turnover rates. Additionally, turnover varied significantly among the 5 police forces with relatively lower paid entry-level officers. For example, while the Federal Protective Service (19 percent) and NIH Police (58 percent) entry-level officers both received the lowest starting pay, turnover differed dramatically.

Likewise, no clear pattern existed regarding turnover among police forces receiving federal law enforcement retirement benefits and those receiving traditional federal retirement benefits. For example, entry-level officers at the Library of Congress Police, U.S. Capitol Police, and Supreme Court Police all received equivalent pay in fiscal year 2002. However, the Library of Congress (11 percent) had a lower turnover rate than the Capitol Police (13 percent) and Supreme Court Police (16 percent), despite the fact that officers at the latter 2 police forces received federal law enforcement

retirement benefits. In addition, while officers at both the Park Police (19 percent) and Secret Service Uniformed Division (25 percent) received law enforcement retirement benefits, these forces experienced higher turnover rates than some forces such as U.S. Postal Service Police (14 percent) and FBI Police (17 percent), whose officers did not receive law enforcement retirement benefits and whose entry-level officers received lower starting salaries.

More than half (316) of the 599 officers who voluntarily separated from the police forces in fiscal year 2002 went to TSA—nearly all (313 of 316) to become Federal Air Marshals where they were able to earn higher salaries, federal law enforcement retirement benefits, and a type of pay premium for unscheduled duty equaling 25 percent of their base salary. The number (316) of police officers who voluntarily separated from the 13 police forces to take positions at TSA nearly equaled the increase in the total number of separations (354) that occurred between fiscal years 2001 and 2002.

About 25 percent (148) of the voluntarily separated officers accepted other federal law enforcement positions, excluding positions at TSA, and about 5 percent (32 officers) took nonlaw enforcement positions, excluding positions at TSA. Furthermore, about 9 percent (51) of the voluntarily separated officers took positions in state or local law enforcement or separated to, among other things, continue their education. Officials were unable to determine where the remaining 9 percent (52) of the voluntarily separated officers went. Table 5 provides a summary of where officers who voluntarily separated in fiscal year 2002 went.

Table 5: Summary of Where Officers Who Voluntarily Separated from the 13 Police Forces in Fiscal Year 2002 Went

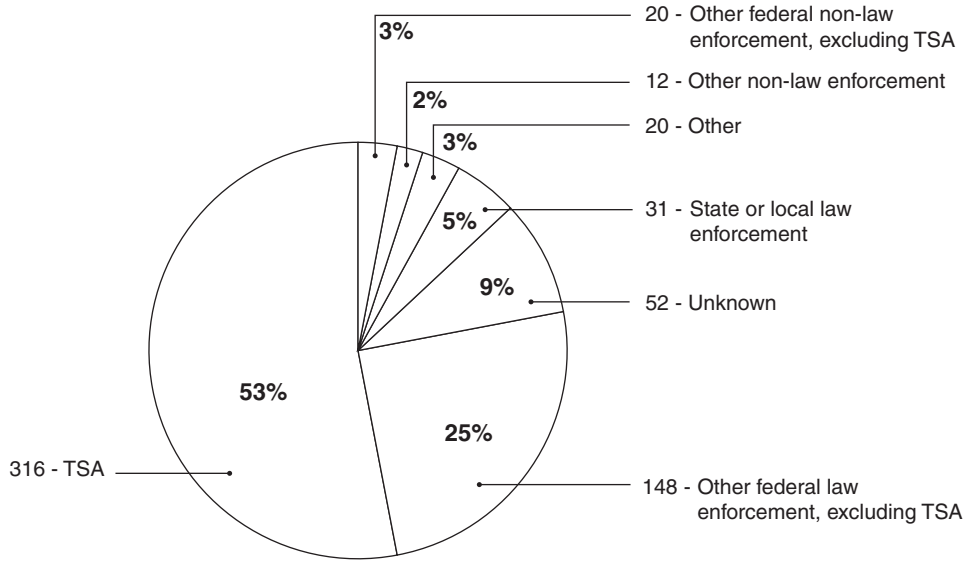
Uniformed police force	TSA	Other federal law enforcement, excluding TSA	State or local law enforcement	Other federal nonlaw enforcement, excluding TSA	Other nonlaw enforcement	Other	Unknown	Total voluntary separations ^a
Library of Congress	3	4	1	0	0	0	1	9
Supreme Court	5	5	2	0	1	1	0	14
U.S. Capitol	66	36	14	0	5	11	11	143
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	10	10	2	1	2	0	0	25
Secret Service	148	45	5	1	2	3	30	234
Park Police	22	6	0	1	1	5	1	36
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	12	12	3	0	0	0	5	32
U.S. Mint	18	3	0	0	0	0	0	21
Government Printing Office	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Federal Bureau of Investigation	16	1	0	13	0	0	0	30
U.S. Postal Service	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Federal Protective Service	7	10	0	0	1	0	3	21
National Institutes of Health	9	8	4	4	0	0	0	25
Total	316	148	31	20	12	20	52	599

Source: GAO analysis of turnover data provided by the 13 police forces.

^aExcludes voluntary retirements and disability.

Figure 4 shows a percentage breakdown of where the 599 officers who voluntarily separated from the 13 police forces during fiscal year 2002 went.

Figure 4: Percentage Breakdown of Where 599 Officers Who Voluntarily Separated during Fiscal Year 2002 Went



Source: GAO analysis of turnover data provided by the 13 police forces.

Although we did not survey individual officers to determine why they separated from these police forces, officials from the 13 forces reported a number of reasons that officers had separated, including to obtain better pay and/or benefits at other police forces, less overtime, and greater responsibility. Without surveying each of the 599 officers who voluntarily separated from their police forces in fiscal year 2002, we could not draw any definitive conclusions about the reasons they left. For additional details on turnover at the 13 police forces, see appendix II.

The use of human capital flexibilities to address turnover varied among the 13 police forces. For example, officials at 4 of the 13 police forces reported that they were able to offer retention allowances, which may assist the forces in retaining experienced officers, and 3 of these police forces used this tool to retain officers in fiscal year 2002. The average retention allowances paid to officers in fiscal year 2002 were about \$1,000 at the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, \$3,500 at the Federal Protective Service, and more than \$4,200 at the NIH Police. The police forces reported various reasons for not making greater use of available human capital flexibilities in fiscal year 2002, including

-
- lack of funding for human capital flexibilities,
 - lack of awareness among police force officials that the human capital flexibilities were available, and
 - lack of specific requests for certain flexibilities such as time-off awards or tuition reimbursement.

The limited use of human capital flexibilities by many of the 13 police forces and the reasons provided for the limited use are consistent with our governmentwide study of the use of such authorities. In December 2002, we reported that federal agencies have not made greater use of such flexibilities for reasons such as agencies' weak strategic human capital planning, inadequate funding for using these flexibilities given competing priorities, and managers' and supervisors' lack of awareness and knowledge of the flexibilities.¹⁹ We further stated that the insufficient or ineffective use of flexibilities can significantly hinder the ability of agencies to recruit, hire, retain, and manage their human capital. Additionally, in May 2003, we reported that OPM can better assist agencies in using human capital flexibilities by, among other things, maximizing its efforts to make the flexibilities more widely known to agencies through compiling, analyzing, and sharing information about when, where, and how the broad range of flexibilities are being used, and should be used, to help agencies meet their human capital management needs.²⁰ For additional information on human capital flexibilities at the 13 police forces, see appendix III.

Most Forces Experienced Recruitment Difficulties

Nine of the 13 police forces reported difficulties recruiting officers to at least a little or some extent. Despite recruitment difficulties faced by many of the police forces, none of the police forces used important human capital recruitment flexibilities, such as recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments, in fiscal year 2002. Some police force officials reported that the human capital recruitment flexibilities were not used for various

¹⁹U.S. General Accounting Office, *Human Capital: Effective Use of Flexibilities Can Assist Agencies in Managing Their Workforces*, [GAO-03-2](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 2002).

²⁰U.S. General Accounting Office, *Human Capital: OPM Can Better Assist Agencies in Using Personnel Flexibilities*, [GAO-03-428](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 2003).

reasons, such as limited funding or that the flexibilities themselves were not available to the forces during the fiscal year 2002 recruiting cycle.²¹

Officials at 4 of the 13 police forces (Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police, the FBI Police, Federal Protective Service, and NIH Police) reported that they were having a great or very great deal of difficulty recruiting officers. In addition, officials at 5 police forces reported that they were having difficulty recruiting officers to a little or some extent or to a moderate extent. Among the reasons given for recruitment difficulties were:

- low pay;
- the high cost of living in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area;
- difficulty completing the application/background investigation process; and
- better retirement benefits at other law enforcement agencies.

Conversely, officials at 4 of the 13 police forces (Library of Congress Police, the Supreme Court Police, U.S. Mint Police, and U.S. Postal Service Police) reported that they were not having difficulty recruiting officers. Library of Congress officials attributed their police force's lack of difficulty recruiting officers to attractive pay and working conditions and the ability to hire officers at any age above 20 and who also will not be subject to a mandatory retirement age.²² Supreme Court officials told us that their police force had solved a recent recruitment problem by focusing additional resources on recruiting and emphasizing the force's attractive work environment to potential recruits. U.S. Postal Service officials reported that their police force was not experiencing a recruitment problem because it hired its police officers from within the agency. Table 6 provides a summary of the level of recruitment difficulties reported by the 13 police forces.

²¹All executive branch agencies have the authority to use human capital flexibilities, such as recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments. However, agencies may choose not to offer them.

²²Police forces that are not covered by federal law enforcement retirement benefits do not have a mandatory retirement age.

Table 6: Extent to Which Police Forces Reported Experiencing Recruitment Difficulties in the Washington MSA

Uniformed police force	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little or some extent	No extent
Library of Congress					•
Supreme Court					•
U.S. Capitol				•	
Pentagon Force Protection Agency			•		
Secret Service			•		
Park Police			•		
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	•				
U.S. Mint Police					•
Government Printing Office			•		
Federal Bureau of Investigation		•			
U.S. Postal Service					•
Federal Protective Service		•			
National Institutes of Health		•			
Total	1	3	4	1	4

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

Although many of the police forces reported facing recruitment difficulties, none of the police forces used human capital recruitment tools, such as recruitment bonuses and student loan repayments, in fiscal year 2002. For more information on human capital flexibilities, see appendix III.

Conclusions

Without surveying each of the 599 officers who voluntarily separated from their police forces in fiscal year 2002, we could not draw any definitive conclusions about the reasons they left. However, officials at the 13 police forces included in our review reported that officers separated from their positions for such reasons as to (1) obtain better pay and/or benefits at other police forces, (2) work less overtime, and (3) assume greater responsibility.

The number of separations across the 13 police forces included in our review increased by 354 between fiscal years 2001 and 2002. This increase almost equaled the number (316) of officers who voluntarily separated from their forces to join TSA. Given that TSA's Federal Air Marshal Program has now been established, and the buildup in staffing has been substantially completed, the increase in turnover experienced in fiscal year 2002 at 12 of the 13 police forces may have been a one-time occurrence. Additionally, the recent pay increases received by officers at 12 of the 13 police forces, along with the potential implementation of

various human capital flexibilities, might also help to address recruitment and retention issues experienced by many of the police forces.

Agency Comments

We requested comments on a draft of this report from each of the 13 federal uniformed police forces included in our review. We received written comments from 12 of the 13 police forces (the Federal Protective Service did not provide comments). Of the 12 police forces that commented, 11 either generally agreed with the information presented or did not express an overall opinion about the report.

In its comments, the U.S. Secret Service raised four main issues relating to the pay, retirement benefits, and job responsibilities information. First, it suggested that we expand our review to include information on the compensation packages offered to separating officers, particularly those moving to TSA. However, our objective was to provide information on pay, retirement benefits, types of duties, turnover, and the use of human capital flexibilities at 13 federal uniformed police forces in the Washington, D.C. area. Our aim was not to compare the officers' previous and new job pay, benefits, responsibilities, or training requirements.

Second, the U.S. Secret Service suggested that we report that a pattern existed between employee turnover and pay. However, our discussions with human capital officials in the 13 police forces found that separating officers provided them with a variety of reasons why they chose to leave their police forces, including increased pay, additional benefits, greater job satisfaction, and personal reasons. We did not contact separating officers to determine why they decided to move to other jobs and whether the new jobs was comparable in pay, benefits, and job responsibilities. Nevertheless, with the information we obtained, we were unable to discern any clear patterns between employee turnover and pay. That is, turnover varied significantly among police forces that had similar pay for entry-level officers.

Third, the U.S. Secret Service suggested that we calculate the differences in retirement benefits that would accrue to officers in the different forces. We noted in our report that different forces had different retirement plans with significant differences in benefits. However, calculating the retirement benefits of a hypothetical police officer at each of the forces was beyond the scope of our review.

Finally, the U.S. Secret Service noted that fundamental differences exist among the agencies' authorities, responsibilities, duties, and training

requirements, and that this could account for differences in compensation. We agree that differences exist among the 13 agencies, and we captured many of these differences in the report. However, we did not attempt to determine the extent to which these differences accounted for differences in police officer compensation.

We also requested and received comments from OPM. OPM was concerned that the data provided in our report will lead to unintended conclusions, citing what it considered to be a lack of substantive analysis and comparisons of the pay systems involved. OPM further commented that the data and information we report must not serve as a basis for modifying the pay structure, salaries, or retirement system of any of the police forces.

Our report provides information on 13 federal uniformed police forces that had not been previously compiled, which is useful in comparing entry-level pay, retirement benefits, types of duties, turnover rates, and the use of human capital flexibilities. In preparing this report, we worked closely with these police forces to obtain reliable information on these items, as well as the conditions and challenges confronting their operations. Nevertheless, we agree that more comprehensive information would be useful in deciding how best to deal with pay, benefit, and retention issues. As the executive branch agency responsible for establishing human capital policies and monitoring their implementation, OPM is in a good position to perform the additional analysis it believes would be useful to draw conclusions on such issues.

Most of the police forces and OPM provided technical comments, which were incorporated in the report, where appropriate. The Department of the Interior (U.S. Park Police), NIH, OPM, and the U.S. Supreme Court provided formal letters, and the U.S. Secret Service provided an internal memorandum, which are included in appendixes V through IX.

We are sending copies of this report to the Attorney General, Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary of the Interior, Chair of the Capitol Police Board, the Librarian of Congress, the Public Printer, the Marshal of the Supreme Court, the Postmaster General, the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security, and the Directors of NIH, OPM, and the Pentagon Force Protection Agency. We will also provide copies of this report to the directors of each of the 13 police forces, relevant congressional committees, and Members of Congress. We will make

copies of this report available to other interested parties upon request. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 512-8777 or at stanar@gao.gov or Weldon McPhail, Assistant Director, at (202) 512-8644 or at mcphailw@gao.gov. See appendix X for additional GAO contacts and staff acknowledgments.



Richard M. Stana
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues

Appendix I: Counties and Cities Included in the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area

Washington, D.C.

Maryland counties

Calvert County
Charles County
Frederick County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Virginia counties and cities

Counties

Arlington County
Clarke County
Culpeper County
Fairfax County
Fauquier County
King George County
Loudoun County
Prince William County
Spotsylvania County
Stafford County
Warren County

Cities

Alexandria city
Fairfax city
Falls Church city
Fredericksburg city
Manassas city
Manassas Park city

West Virginia counties

Berkeley County
Jefferson County

Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the 13 Police Forces

Table 7 shows, among other things, that during fiscal year 2002, 12 of the 13 police forces experienced increased turnover from the prior fiscal year, while 8 of the 13 police forces experienced their highest turnover rates over the 6-year period, from fiscal years 1997 through 2002.

Table 7: Number of Separations and Turnover Rates of Uniformed Police Officers in the Washington MSA for Fiscal Years 1997 through 2002

	FY 1997		FY 1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY 2002	
	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)	Separations	Turnover rate (in percent)
Library of Congress	13	12	4	4	3	3	22	18	26	19	14	11
Supreme Court	4	5	4	5	5	6	6	7	10	10	17	16
U.S. Capitol	84	16	76	7	73	7	110	9	88	7	160	13
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	23	11	29	12	52	21	42	16	31	12	33	13
Secret Service	73	7	122	11	108	11	150	15	110	10	277	25
Park Police	31	6	30	6	44	9	33	7	31	7	55	13
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	11	9	18	14	10	8	15	11	12	8	36	27
U.S. Mint	a	a	a	a	a	a	24	7	5	9	22	41
Government Printing Office	5	10	7	13	10	18	4	7	7	13	8	16
Federal Bureau of Investigation	1	1	10	6	5	3	6	3	9	5	32	17
U.S. Postal Service	4	^b	11	9	14	11	11	8	12	10	16	14
Federal Protective Service	23	^b	14	^b	13	6	38	20	21	12	29	19
National Institutes of Health	19	45	5	12	19	45	9	19	13	25	30	58
Total	291		330		356		470		375		729	
Percentage change from prior year			13%		8%		32%		-20%		94%	

Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 forces.

^aU.S. Mint Police reported that it used mainly contract police officers during fiscal years 1997 through 1999.

^bTurnover rate cannot be calculated due to incomplete data.

Table 8 shows that officers with fewer than 5 years of experience on their forces accounted for about 65 percent of the voluntary separations in fiscal year 2002.

**Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the
13 Police Forces**

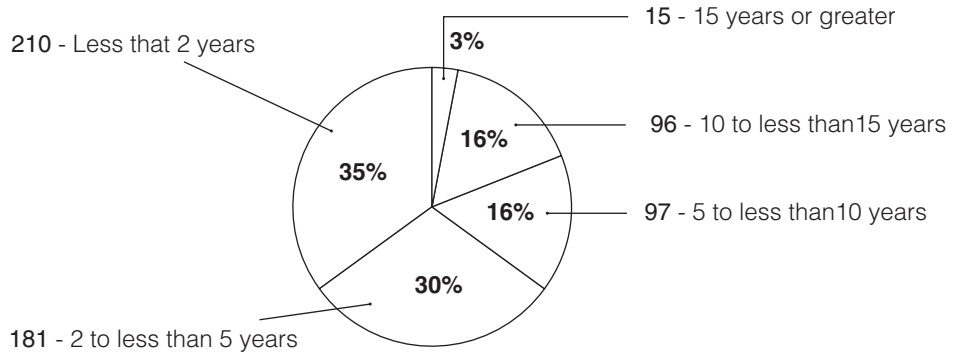
Table 8: Fiscal Year 2002 Voluntary Separations by Years of Experience on a Police Force for 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Less than 2 yrs.	2 yrs. to less than 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to less than 10 yrs.	10 yrs. to less than 15 yrs.	15 yrs. to less than 20 yrs.	20 yrs. to less than 25 yrs.	25 yrs. or greater	Total separations
Library of Congress	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	9
Supreme Court	2	8	1	0	3	0	0	14
U.S. Capitol	59	50	23	8	2	1	0	143
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	12	10	1	2	0	0	0	25
Secret Service	88	42	34	67	3	0	0	234
Park Police	3	11	9	12	1	0	0	36
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	14	12	5	0	1	0	0	32
U.S. Mint	6	12	1	2	0	0	0	21
Government Printing Office	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Federal Bureau of Investigation	9	9	8	4	0	0	0	30
U.S. Postal Service	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	7
Federal Protective Service	2	10	9	0	0	0	0	21
National Institutes of Health	10	8	4	0	2	1	0	25
Total	210	181	97	96	13	2	0	599

Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 police forces.

Figure 5 shows that officers with fewer than 2 years of service on their forces accounted for about 35 percent of the voluntary separations in fiscal year 2002, and officers with 2 to 5 years of service comprised an additional 30 percent.

Figure 5: Voluntary Separations, Excluding Retirements and Disability, by Years of Service on a Force in Fiscal Year 2002



Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 police forces.

Table 9 shows that approximately half (316) of the 599 police officers who voluntarily separated from their forces in fiscal year 2002 went to TSA. Of the 316 officers who went to TSA, about 53 percent (166) had fewer than 5 years of experience on their forces. An additional 19 percent (59) had 5 years to less than 10 years of experience on their forces.

**Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the
13 Police Forces**

Table 9: Separations to TSA in Fiscal Year 2002 by Police Force and Years of Service on a Force for 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Less than 2 yrs.	2 yrs. to less than 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to less than 10 yrs.	10 yrs. to less than 15 yrs.	15 yrs. to less than 20 yrs.	20 yrs. to less than 25 yrs.	25 yrs. or greater	Total separations
Library of Congress	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Supreme Court	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	5
U.S. Capitol	13	27	17	6	2	1	0	66
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	3	6	0	1	0	0	0	10
Secret Service	39	21	22	63	3	0	0	148
Park Police	0	8	5	8	1	0	0	22
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	2	5	4	0	1	0	0	12
U.S. Mint	4	11	1	2	0	0	0	18
Government Printing Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Bureau of Investigation	5	6	4	1	0	0	0	16
U.S. Postal Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Protective Service	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	7
National Institutes of Health	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	9
Total	75	91	59	81	9	1	0	316

Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 police forces.

Table 10 shows that about 25 percent (148) of the 599 police officers who voluntarily separated from their forces in fiscal year 2002 took other federal law enforcement positions. Officers with fewer than 5 years of experience on their forces accounted for about 79 percent (117) of the separations to other federal law enforcement positions, and officers with 5 years to less than 10 years of experience accounted for an additional 16 percent (23).

**Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the
13 Police Forces**

Table 10: Separations to Other Federal Law Enforcement Positions, Excluding TSA, in Fiscal Year 2002 by Years of Service on a Force for 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Less than 2 yrs.	2 yrs. to less than 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to less than 10 yrs.	10 yrs. to less than 15 yrs.	15 yrs. to less than 20 yrs.	20 yrs. to less than 25 yrs.	25 yrs. or greater	Total separations
Library of Congress	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Supreme Court	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
U.S. Capitol	18	13	4	1	0	0	0	36
Pentagon Force Protection Agency	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	10
Secret Service	16	17	9	3	0	0	0	45
Park Police	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	6
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	12
U.S. Mint	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Government Printing Office	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Federal Bureau of Investigation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
U.S. Postal Service	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	7
Federal Protective Service	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	10
National Institutes of Health	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	8
Total	53	64	23	7	1	0	0	148

Source: GAO analysis of separations data provided by the 13 police forces.

Table 11 shows that of the 13 police forces surveyed, 11 reported problems ranging in severity from a little or some extent, to a very great extent, with retaining officers in the Washington MSA. Of these 11 police forces, 4 characterized their agencies retention difficulties as a very great extent. Two police forces, the Government Printing Office Police and the Library of Congress Police, reported no difficulty with retention.

**Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the
13 Police Forces**

Table 11: Extent to Which Police Forces Reported Experiencing Retention Difficulties in the Washington MSA

Uniformed police force	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little or some extent	No extent
Library of Congress					•
Supreme Court			•		
U.S. Capitol			•		
Pentagon Force Protection Agency				•	
Secret Service	•				
Park Police		•			
Bureau of Engraving and Printing	•				
U.S. Mint	•				
Government Printing Office					•
Federal Bureau of Investigation		•			
U.S. Postal Service		•			
Federal Protective Service		•			
National Institutes of Health	•				
Total	4	4	2	1	2

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

Police forces reporting difficulties indicated a number of commonalities in terms of why officers had left the forces. Among the reasons given were¹

- better pay at other agencies;
- better benefits, including law enforcement retirement, at other agencies;
- better morale at other agencies;
- more challenging work at other agencies;
- promotional opportunities at other agencies;
- too much overtime at their police forces; and
- retirements from their police forces.

Library of Congress Police officials attributed their low turnover rate to pay, working conditions, and the fact that the force does not have any age restrictions, which allows the force to hire older, more experienced officers. Each of the forces with retention difficulties reported steps taken to address the problem, including providing retention allowances, improving training, and improving working conditions. Additionally, officials from several police forces reported that they were considering providing increases in retention allowances and student loan repayments to address their retention difficulties.

¹The forces determined why officers were leaving primarily through exit interviews and other paperwork associated with resignations, as well as through anecdotal information.

**Appendix II: Selected Turnover Data for the
13 Police Forces**

Only two police forces, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency and the Supreme Court Police, reported that the measures they had taken had solved the retention problem to a great extent; the remaining police forces indicated either that the measures taken had had a little or no effect or that it was too early to determine whether the measures taken would solve the retention problem.

Appendix III: Use of Human Capital Flexibilities

Table 12 illustrates the use of human capital flexibilities by the 13 police forces included in our review. While agency officials reported that a variety of human capital flexibilities were available across the agencies, there was variation among agencies both in terms of the specific flexibilities available and in the frequency of use. For instance, only 3 of the 13 agencies reported the availability of recruitment bonuses, and none were given in fiscal year 2002. Ten of the 13 reported the availability of performance-based cash awards, and 9 of these agencies made these awards in amounts averaging \$109-\$2,500.

Appendix III: Use of Human Capital Flexibilities

Table 12: Reported Availability and Use of Human Capital Flexibilities at 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Federal Bureau of Investigation	Federal Protective Service	Government Printing Office	Library of Congress
Monetary incentives					
Relocation bonuses	N	Y	Y	N	N
Number used in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
Recruitment bonuses	N	Y	Y	N	N
Number used in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
Retention allowances	N	Y	Y	N	N
Number used in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	120	N/A	N/A
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	N/A	N/A	\$3,496	N/A	N/A
Increase in pay upon completion of basic training	N	N	N	Y	Y
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,702	\$1,381
Student loan repayment	N	Y	Y	N	N
Number of officers that received repayments	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
Incentive awards and recognition					
Performance-based cash awards	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Number of awards in fiscal year 2002	N/A	100	12	N/A	8
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	N/A	\$2,500	\$388	N/A	\$656
Quality step increases	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Number of increases in fiscal year 2002	1	9	1	N/A	N/A
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	\$1,087	\$1,000	\$1,148	N/A	N/A
Honorary and informal recognition awards	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Number of awards in fiscal year 2002	11	N/A	^a	0	N/A
Time-off awards	Y	Y	N	N	N
Number of awards in fiscal year 2002	1	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average amount, in hours, in fiscal year 2002	8	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance development and training					
Tuition assistance	N	Y	Y	N	N
Are all officers eligible?	N/A	Y	Y	N/A	N/A
Number of officers who received this assistance in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	8	N/A	N/A
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	^a	N/A	N/A
External training reimbursement	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Are all officers eligible?	N/A	Y	Y	N	N/A
Number of officers who received reimbursement in fiscal year 2002	N/A	10	28	0	N/A
Average amount in fiscal year 2002	N/A	\$750	^a	0	N/A

**Appendix III: Use of Human Capital
Flexibilities**

National Institutes of Health	Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Secret Service	Supreme Court	U.S. Capitol	U.S. Mint	U.S. Park Police	U.S. Postal Service
N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N
N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
51	253	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
\$4,225	\$1,013	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,381	\$1,381	N/A	\$788	N/A
N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
48	196	1,161	20	N/A	0	392	100
\$2,000	\$1,364	\$438	\$555	N/A	0	\$827	\$109
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
1	44	0	1	N/A	2	N/A	0
\$3,000	\$2,406	0	\$2,152	N/A	\$4,445	N/A	0
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
38	3	5	20	0	1	70	54
Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
10	0	0	N/A	N/A	4	717	N/A
8	0	0	N/A	N/A	40	10	N/A
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N	N/A	Y
0	10	11	3	N/A	20	N/A	0
0	\$302	\$1,536	\$2,304	N/A	\$1,508	N/A	0
N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
N/A	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y
N/A	185	0	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
N/A	\$1,155	N/A	\$1,226	N/A	N/A	N/A	0

**Appendix III: Use of Human Capital
Flexibilities**

	Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Federal Bureau of Investigation	Federal Protective Service	Government Printing Office	Library of Congress
Work-life policies and programs					
Gym/health program	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Are all officers eligible?	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A
Child care program	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Are all officers eligible?	N/A	Y	Y	N/A	Y
Alternative work schedule	N	N	N	N	N
Are all officers eligible?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transportation subsidies	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Are all offices eligible?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Take home vehicle	N	N	Y	N	N
Number of officers with take home vehicles in fiscal year 2002	N/A	N/A	122	N/A	N/A
Other human capital flexibilities					
Waiver of qualification requirements	N	Y	Y	N	N
Number of waivers in fiscal year 2002	N/A	11	0	N/A	N/A
Specialized unit opportunities	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Are all officers eligible?	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A
Referral bonuses	N	Y	N	N	N
Number used in fiscal year 2002	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

^aThe Federal Protective Service reported that it was unable to produce reliable data for this item.

Appendix III: Use of Human Capital Flexibilities

National Institutes of Health	Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Secret Service	Supreme Court	U.S. Capitol	U.S. Mint	U.S. Park Police	U.S. Postal Service
N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y
N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A
Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N
N	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	N/A
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A
N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
N/A	N/A	84	2	34	N/A	133	N/A
N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	0
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New Hire Selection Process

Table 13 provides information on the recruiting strategies used as reported by the 13 police forces during fiscal year 2002. A number of strategies were employed, including placement of announcements in various media sources. Also, in addition to agency and OPM Web sites, a number of agencies reported using various independent Web sites related to employment searches.

**Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New
Hire Selection Process**

Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New Hire Selection Process

Table 13: Use of Recruiting Strategies as Reported by the 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Federal Bureau of Investigation	Federal Protective Service	Government Printing Office	Library of Congress	National Institutes of Health
Colleges/universities						
Local	•		•		•	•
Nationwide	•					
Job Fairs						
Local	•	•	•	•		•
Nationwide	•					
Internet						
Agency Web site	•	•	•	•	•	•
OPM Web site	•	•	•	•	•	•
Other Web site(s)	•		•			
Newspaper	•	•			•	•
Radio	•	•				•
Television						
Military	•	•	•	•		•
Unemployment offices	•			•	•	
Libraries	•					•
Mailings	•			•	•	
Other						•

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New Hire Selection Process

Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Secret Service	Supreme Court	U.S. Capitol	U.S. Mint	U.S. Park Police	U.S. Postal Service
•	•	•	•	•	•	
•	•	•	•	•	•	
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Table 14 shows that qualification requirements and the selection process used were similar across the agencies. The U.S. Postal Service Police was the only force that did not require a high school diploma or prior law enforcement experience. Additionally, as part of the selection process, all 13 police forces required new hires to have successfully completed an application, an interview(s), a medical examination, a background investigation, and a drug test. Each force also had at least one additional requirement, such as a secret clearance or physical fitness evaluation.

Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New Hire Selection Process

Table 14: Minimum Qualification Requirements and Selection Process Reported by 13 Police Forces in the Washington MSA

	Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Federal Bureau of Investigation	Federal Protective Service	Government Printing Office	Library of Congress	National Institutes of Health
Minimum qualification requirements						
High school diploma/equivalent		•	•		•	
2-year college degree in any major						
4-year college degree in criminal justice related major						
1-year law enforcement experience				•		
2-year college degree in any major OR 1-year of law enforcement experience						
4-year college degree in any major OR 1 year of law enforcement experience						
4-year college degree in a criminal justice related major OR 1 year of law enforcement experience	•					•
Selection process						
Application	•	•	•	•	•	•
Written examinations(s)	•	•				
Interview	•	•	•	•	•	•
Medical examination	•	•	•	•	•	•
Physical fitness evaluation	•	•	•		•	
Psychological evaluation		•				
Background investigation	•	•	•	•	•	•
Polygraph test		•				
Secret clearance	•		•	•		•
Top secret clearance		•				
Drug test	•	•	•	•	•	•

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by the 13 police forces.

Appendix IV: Recruiting Strategies and New Hire Selection Process

Pentagon Force Protection Agency	Secret Service	Supreme Court	U.S. Capitol	U.S. Mint	U.S. Park Police	U.S. Postal Service
	•		•			
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	•					
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	•		•			
•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Appendix V: Comments from the Department of the Interior



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

JUN 5 2003

Mr. Richard M. Stana
Director, Homeland Security
and Justice Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W., Rm. 2A38
Washington, DC 20648

Dear Mr. Stana:

Thank you for providing the Department of Interior the opportunity to review and comment on the U.S. General Accounting Office report entitled, "Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C. Area" (GAO-03-658).

The enclosed comments contain a few observations and language refinements. If you have any questions or comments please contact Chief Teresa Chambers, National Park Service, United States Park Police, at, 202/619-7350.

Sincerely,

P. Lynn Scarlett
Assistant Secretary
Policy, Management and Budget

Enclosure

Appendix VI: Comments from the National Institutes of Health



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892
www.nih.gov

MAY 23 2003

Mr. Richard Stana
Director, Homeland Security
and Justice Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Stana:

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report entitled "*Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area*" (GAO-03-658). Enclosed are the comments of the National Institutes of Health.

Sincerely,

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.
Director

Enclosure

**Comments of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
On the U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO) Draft Report
“Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at
13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area,” GAO-03-658**

General Comments

We appreciate this opportunity to review and provide comments on this draft report. This report confirms our own conclusions that the Federal pay and benefits that NIH Police officers receive are among the lowest in the Washington-Metropolitan area. This Congressional report highlights the severe difficulty that agencies, especially the NIH, are experiencing in recruiting and retaining officers due to disparities in pay and benefits, not only with outside entities but within the Federal sector itself. For example, the report illustrates that (with the exception of SWAT teams) the NIH police officers carry out all of the duties and specialized functions that are noted in this report, yet they are compensated less than any of the other reported agencies where comparable skills are required.

The NIH is not authorized to adjust special rate schedules of pay for our officers in order to offer competitive entry and career compensation or to provide Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) enhanced retirement, death, and disability benefits. As with any law enforcement organization, NIH police officers investigate crimes, make arrests and confiscate weapons, testify in courts, protect officials, and are subject to the potential of death and disability in the line of duty. Rigorous work involving primarily the investigation, apprehension, or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of offenses against criminal statutes are the types of primary duties that are considered in determining whether or not the percentage of time that employees spend in carrying out these responsibilities is sufficient to meet LEO coverage. Time spent carrying out these primary duties for violations of both Federal and Maryland criminal statutes is to be considered in making LEO coverage decisions. LEO coverage criteria is a high statutory standard and several Federal jurisdictions that did not meet that standard outright gained LEO coverage by agency-specific statutory interventions. Post September 11, the NIH Office of Research Services management attests that the NIH Police Officers are regularly assigned these paramount duties, are expected to continue to be so assigned on a permanent basis in keeping with the White House report, Securing the Homeland, Strengthening the Nation, and estimate that 60 percent of their work time is spent in carrying out these responsibilities.

NIH has comments on several statements made in the draft GAO report. First, the report speculates that, because of the staffing buildup of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the increase in turnover experienced in fiscal year (FY) 2002 may be a one-time occurrence. NIH has had a long-standing problem of retaining officers because the agency does not have the statutory authority to provide competitive pay and benefits. Especially in a post September 11 world, security personnel are at a premium and competent officers will only build careers with agencies that can provide competitive pay and benefits.

Second, although the report indicates that no police forces used "human capital flexibilities" to recruit officers, NIH would like to state for the record that when surveying potential applicants to determine what financial incentives are of most value, applicants indicated they were more inclined to receive additional pay through retention allowances or increases in pay. To enhance the recruitment of skilled officers, NIH provides appointments above the minimum entry rates. This higher basic rate of pay also serves as a higher base on which compensated benefits such as retirement and overtime are made. These dollars are of greater long-term value to a career officer than a one time, lump-sum recruitment bonus. Nonetheless, if these higher entry rates are still less than the experienced officer is currently earning in the State, local, or private sector, a recruitment bonus may also be authorized. NIH has attempted to reduce attrition by undertaking a number of initiatives. In addition to implementing a special rate of pay from the Office of Personnel Management, NIH has increased retention allowances, is pursuing a request to designate NIH officers as Federal Marshals, and is requesting a delegation of authority to resolve jurisdictional problems to investigate crimes that occur off-campus. In addition, NIH submitted a FY 2004 legislative proposal, approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, to statutorily provide enhanced pay and benefits for the NIH Police as well as provide them with jurisdictional authority. NIH plans on resubmitting the proposal for FY 2005 and each subsequent fiscal year until this issue is favorably resolved. It should be noted that resolving the pay and benefit disparity at the NIH was the subject of legislation introduced in the 107th Congress, but not considered.

Third, the report states that NIH was one of the seven police forces that received pay increases that narrowed the pay gap. However, it is important to note that the closing of the salary gap is only temporary. Without changes in the overall compensation structure to ensure equity among agencies, NIH police salaries will again fall substantially behind other jurisdictions as they continue authorizing raises under their own authorities.

As security needs increase, it is critical that NIH maintain a well-trained, fully staffed force. Also essential is the need for continuity in that staff, something that eludes NIH due to uncompetitive pay and benefits. The 322-acre campus and its satellite facilities support approximately 3,000 research laboratories, 2,500 of which are approved for the use of radioisotopes. NIH has a total of 21 high-containment laboratories and two high-containment animal facilities. These laboratories handle the most hazardous materials and require extensive safety measures. As a part of its bio-defense activities, NIH expects to construct additional high-containment safety laboratories. NIH employs more than 27,000 people in total and about 18,000 people at the Bethesda campus alone. About 8,000 staff are located in Government-owned facilities locally, and the remainder at satellite facilities. Also, there are as many as 6,000 visitors and patients on the NIH Bethesda campus daily. Some of our leading scientists not only work at NIH but also reside on the compound. The Special Events Team of the NIH Police handles over 300 events per year involving high-level visiting dignitaries, including the President of the United States and Members of Congress.

Under current conditions, it is apparent that security is paramount and requires additional competent personnel to meet the demands of the future. Consistent with the President's goal to protect the country from terrorist attacks, we at NIH are prepared to do our part.

Technical Comment

Page 4, paragraph 2, line 10: "NIH Police" should be replaced with "U.S. Postal Service Police."

Appendix VII: Comments from the Office of Personnel Management



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20415

JUN 05 2003

Mr. Richard M. Stana
Director
Homeland Security and Justice Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Stana:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the General Accounting Office's (GAO's) draft report entitled "Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area" (GAO-03-658).

Since the events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath, OPM has provided substantial assistance and support to Federal agencies to ensure that they have the human resources management policies and tools needed to accomplish their missions and continue essential Government services without undue interruption. For example, Federal agencies have experienced significant handicaps in recruiting and retaining police officers due to an increased demand in State and local governments and other agencies for individuals with protective, security, and law enforcement knowledge and experience. This staffing problem is particularly evident in many of the major metropolitan areas. In response to this crisis, earlier this year I approved higher special salary rates for General Schedule police officers in 29 geographic locations throughout the U.S. The special rates apply to police officers in nine Federal agencies—General Services Administration (GSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, Commerce, the Interior, the Treasury, and Transportation. The special rates provided significant pay increases—as much as 20 percent in some grades and locations—for approximately 3,000 police officers.

In the report you state that your primary objectives were to (1) determine the differences in entry-level pay, retirement benefits, and types of duties; (2) provide information on the differences in turnover rates; and (3) provide information on possible difficulties police forces may have faced in recruiting officers, and (4) determine the extent to which human capital flexibilities were available and used to help recruit and retain officers.

We are very concerned that the limited data provided in the draft report will lead to unintended conclusions. The report lacks substantive analysis and comparisons of the pay systems involved, including the types and levels of duties and the laws and rules governing the pay systems, salary structures, and pay progression strategies. The report also is

Mr. Richard M. Stana

2

inconclusive as to whether law enforcement officer retirement benefits are a primary factor in the recruitment and retention of police officers. We strongly recommend that GAO state clearly in the report and the letter to Senator Voinovich (as was stated in our April 30 exit conference) that the data and information provided must not be used to draw conclusions or serve as a basis for modifying the pay structure, salaries, or retirement system of any of the police forces involved without further comprehensive study.

In the enclosure, we have provided additional technical comments for your consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on GAO's draft report.

Sincerely,



Kay Coles James
Director

Enclosure

Appendix VIII: Comments from the United States Secret Service



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223

May 23, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR ANNA F. DIXON
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FROM:

Brian K. Nagel
Assistant Director
Office of Inspection

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian K. Nagel".

SUBJECT:

Federal Uniformed Police
(GAO Job #440126)

Reference is made to your request for the Secret Service to review a General Accounting Office draft report entitled *Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area (Rept. No. GAO-03-658)*.

The following comments are provided by our Office of Protective Operations:

- The report intimates that the increase in fiscal year 2002 attrition in the Federal Uniformed Police agencies was primarily a result of the creation of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Is this a conclusion of the report?
- The Secret Service suggests that the report include salary information from TSA. Since such a large number of employees transferred to TSA, we feel it would be prudent to include information concerning the compensation package that was offered to separating members. We believe this data is relevant.

- On page 1, the objectives of the report are clearly identified. Included in those objectives were starting salary information and retirement benefits information. The Secret Service suggests that the data presented did not provide a full perspective of the retirement benefits. For example, the Secret Service Uniformed Division and the U.S. Capitol Police have the federal law enforcement retirement benefit. However, based on the April 1, 2003, rate of pay, a Capitol Police officer will earn in excess of \$144,000 over a Uniformed Division officer during a 25-year career. This is the result of higher salaries, and faster increases in service steps. When compounded, additional contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan can create large discrepancies in retirement savings. In addition, pension payments are based on the last three years of an employee's salary, i.e., lower annual salaries mean lower pension payments. The Secret Service suggests that GAO provide more in-depth data concerning retirement benefits. Simply identifying the retirement system does not provide readers with a full understanding of retirement benefits.
- On page 4, in the second paragraph, the report indicates the NIH police are having a great or very great deal of difficulty recruiting officers. Later in the same paragraph, it indicates the NIH police are not having any difficulty recruiting officers.
- On page 4, it is reported that, "While officials from the 13 forces reported a number of reasons that officers had separated, including better pay and/or benefits at other police forces, less overtime, and greater responsibilities, we have been unable to discern any clear patterns between employee turnover and pay." (emphasis added) However, page three states, "Of the 729 officers who separated from the 13 police forces in fiscal year 2002, 599 (about 82 percent) voluntarily separated. Of these 599 officers, 316 (about 53 percent) went to TSA – nearly all (313 of 316) to become Federal Air Marshals where they were able to earn higher pay, federal law enforcement retirement benefits, and a type of pay premium for unscheduled duty equaling 25 percent of their base salary." (emphasis added) It seems that the comments on page 3 of the report support a pattern between employee turnover and pay.

- On page 6, it is reported that the “Federal Air Marshals are not limited to the grade and step structure of the federal government’s General Schedule. As a result, TSA has been able to offer air marshal recruits higher compensation and more flexible benefit packages than other police forces.” The report continuously refers to the limited use of human capital flexibilities in the 13 police agencies. It would appear that a system similar to the Air Marshals pay system would provide the 13 agencies with greater human capital flexibility.
- On the chart on page 13, the Secret Service responded negatively to the question concerning patrol outside the agency’s boundaries because the Uniformed Division has full police powers in Washington, D.C. The Secret Service Uniformed Division’s authority derives from U.S. Code Title 3 § 202, which states, “The members of such force shall possess privileges and powers similar to those of the members of the Metropolitan Police of the District of Columbia.” The Uniformed Division also has federal authority, under Title 18, U.S.C., 3056, to perform its protective duties outside the District of Columbia and throughout the United States, in addition to the applicable peace officer status. Therefore, we feel that there are no geographical agency boundaries, provided we stay within our legal authority. Congress authorized these powers for the Uniformed Division because of its duties and responsibilities.
- On the chart on page 14, it is requested that an answer regarding specialized functions performed by officers under the category of “Criminal Investigation” be changed to “yes” to reflect our duties within the District of Columbia.
- On page 17, it is reported that, “There was no clear pattern evident between employee pay and turnover rates during fiscal year 2002. For example, while some police forces with relatively highly paid entry-level officers such as the Library of Congress Police and the Supreme Court Police had relatively low turnover rates, other police forces with relatively highly paid entry level officers such as the U.S. Mint Police, Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police, and Secret Service Uniformed Division experienced significantly higher turnover rates.” TSA greatly impacted the Secret Service

Uniformed Division. As reported, the Uniformed Division lost 148 members to TSA. The experience levels of those officers varied and were broken down as follows:

- Less than 2 years 39 (26%)
- 2 – 5 years 21 (14%)
- 5 – 10 years 22 (15%)
- 10 - 15 years 63 (43%)
- 15 - 20 years 3 (2%)

While we recognize that the report compared all agencies collectively, we feel that there are fundamental differences in each of the 13 police agencies. An agency's authority, responsibilities, duties, and training requirements are critical skills, and can be highly marketable. As reflected in the chart above, TSA placed tremendous value on the experience and skills of the Secret Service Uniformed Division. The Secret Service suggests that the report reflect the fundamental differences in each of the agencies, and how these differences may have impacted on the agency's attrition.

The following comments are provided by our Office of Human Resources and Training:

While the Secret Service Uniformed Division was experiencing 25% voluntarily separations in fiscal year 2002, we immediately began an enhanced Uniformed Division recruitment effort. This effort was not only to fill the vacated positions but to also recruit for new Uniformed Division positions.

In fiscal year 2003, the Secret Service expanded its specialized teams and increased the number of opportunities to qualify for those teams. This is an effort to enhance our capabilities and further encourage retention among our officers with fewer than five years of service.

The Secret Service anticipates an additional increase in the size of its Uniformed Division in fiscal year 2004. We are planning to use a number of human capital flexibilities, such as retention allowances, recruitment bonuses (for foreign language abilities), as well as to continue with performance based awards, to assist with the recruitment of new officers and with the retention of experienced officers.”

Should you have any additional questions regarding this matter, please contact Special Agent in Charge Roger Goodes or Staff Analyst DeDee Hayes, Office of Inspection, at 202/406-5766.

Attachments

Appendix IX: Comments from the Supreme Court of the United States

Office of the Marshal
Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

May 20, 2003

202-479-3333

FAX
202-479-2971

VIA FACSIMILE

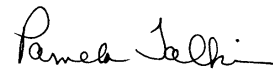
Richard M. Stana
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues
United States General Accounting Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Stana:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in and comment on the United States General Accounting Office study and report on *Federal Uniformed Police: Selected Data on Pay, Recruitment, and Retention at 13 Police Forces in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area*.

The report is clearly the result of much hard work and careful analysis. I hope it will be helpful to Congress and to interested law enforcement entities.

Sincerely,



Pamela Talkin
Marshal

Appendix X: GAO Contacts and Acknowledgments

GAO Contacts

Richard M. Stana (202) 512-8777
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Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the persons named above, Leo M. Barbour, Susan L. Conlon, Evan Gilman, Kimberley Granger, Geoffrey Hamilton, Laura Luo, Michael O' Donnell, Doris Page, George Scott, Lou V.B. Smith, Edward H. Stephenson, Jr., Maria D. Strudwick, Mark Tremba, and Gregory H. Wilmoth made key contributions to this report.

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