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THE WORK FORCE OF THE FUTURE
A new report says the work force of the year 2000 will be older, wiser and more diverse.
BY LESLEY BARNES
What will the federal work force look like in the year 2000? A recent report prepared by the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank, for the Office of Personnel Management looks into a crystal ball and tries to answer that question. The prediction is for an older, more highly skilled work force with increasing numbers of women and minorities—and an accompanying batch of management challenges that must be addressed before the 21st century.
Civil Service 2000 details historical and projected trends in the demographics of the federal ranks and offers suggestions on how the government can begin to prepare for the changes that will occur in the next 12 years. The report is modeled after Workforce 2000, prepared for the Labor Department by the Hudson Institute, which outlines the probable changes that will occur in the composition and skills of the national work force by the year 2000.
The size of the federal work force has remained fairly stable for the past 20 years, and is likely to remain so. After dropping from 2.27 million to 2.15 million in the first two years of the Reagan Administration, federal civilian employment gradually rose back
example, will likely grow because of society's increasing "financial complexity and litigiousness." But a decreased dependence on farming will lessen Agriculture's role, and better relations with the Soviets and accompanying arms reduction efforts could
edge of the "baby boom" generation nears retirement, the median age of the country's work force will rise by three years, from 36 to 39. The pool of young workers available for all entry-level jobs will thus decrease during the next 12 years.
This trend will have added significance for the federal government, which currently employs older workers than do employers as a whole. Though an older federal work force will be experienced, knowledgable and reliable, it also presents a difficult challenge for Uncle Sam: To the extent that older workers can be less adaptable, the work force may become noncompetitive and unresponsive to change, the report says.
Wiser
There are currently many more white-collar, professional jobs in the federal sector than in the nation as a whole: Forty-eight percent of federal workers hold professional or management-related jobs, compared with 25 percent nationwide. This phenomenon, which is matched by a relative dearth, compared with national trends, of government clerical and blue-collar jobs, will likely continue. The report predicts that the number of white-collar federal jobs will increase, by
of white-collar federal jobs will decrease
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