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[Public Relations Personnel Costs in 20 Federal Agencies and Various Other Costs]. LCD-77-424; E-161939. June 10, 1977. 11 pp. + 2 enclosures (2 pp.).

Report to Sen. William L. Scott; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

Budget Function: General Government: Other General Government (806).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of Agriculture; Civil Service Commission; General Services Administration.

Congressional Relevance: Sen. William L. Scott.

Authority: Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended. P.L. 94-419. 44 U.S.C. 1905. 44 U.S.C. 1718. 44 U.S.C. 1301. 7 U.S.C. 417.

Much of the data requested on the costs associated with various specific Federal programs is not available in any centralized form. GAO investigated the following areas: the number of Federal employees in public affairs and congressional relations in the 20 largest Government agencies; the amount spent for recruitment by the military; Government audiovisual costs; the development and printing costs of the Agricultural Yearbook bicentennial issue and the farmers' bulletin cost; the cost of the Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Outreach program for fiscal year 1976; and advertising costs in the Federal Government. Findings/Conclusions: Information submitted by the 20 agencies indicated that total personnel expenses for public affairs and congressional relations totaled about \$82 million in FY 1976. According to the Department of Defense, about \$516 million was spent for military recruitment during FY 1976. Limited information is available on Government audiovisual costs, and agency accounting systems are not generally designed to report the information. The total cost for the 1976 Yearbook produced by the Department of Agriculture was about \$577,000. The Department also spent about \$578,000 on production of the farmers' bulletins in fiscal year 1976. Both the Yearbook and the bulletins are published primarily for delivery to, or distribution for, Members of Congress. The Department of Agriculture reimbursed State agencies \$968,604 for costs incurred in the Food Stamp Outreach program in FY 1976. No current information is available on Government advertising costs. (SC)

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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B-161939

The Honorable William L. Scott
United States Senate

Released 7/28/77
JUN 10 1977

Dear Senator Scott:

By letter dated November 29, 1976, you requested that we obtain information on costs associated with various Federal programs such as public relations and audiovisual activities. After meeting with your office, we agreed to obtain:

- The number of Federal employees in public affairs and congressional relations and the salaries for these employees in the 20 largest Government agencies.
- The amount spent for recruitment by the military.
- Government audiovisual costs, if available from the General Services Administration.
- The development and printing costs of the Agriculture Yearbook bicentennial issue, and the farmers' bulletins cost, and the number of copies of both distributed free by the Government.
- The cost of the Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Outreach program for fiscal year 1976.
- Advertising costs in the Federal Government.

Agency-supplied data is presented below. As agreed with your office, we did not verify the accuracy of information furnished by the various agencies.

DATA ON FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
WORKING IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

Since there is no Government-wide definition of public affairs, each agency defined public affairs and congressional relations itself to determine which employees to include in each category. We requested that the agencies include support staff as well as professional employees.

Information submitted by the 20 agencies is:

	FY 1976 (Actual)		FY 1977 (Budgeted)	
	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Public affairs	3,496	\$62,414,557	3,366	\$65,464,085
Congressional relations	950	\$19,693,888	934	20,126,275

Enclosure I is an index of the agencies, their personnel and salaries. The number of public affairs and congressional relations employees reported by the agencies and shown in the index varied widely. For example, the Department of Transportation, which had a \$4.3 billion fiscal year 1976 budget, reported 281 public affairs employees for fiscal year 1976 while the Department of Agriculture, with a \$11.8 billion budget in fiscal year 1976, reported only 8 employees in public affairs.

Department of Agriculture

A previous GAO report on public affairs costs (B-161939, Sept. 30, 1975) explained the Department of Agriculture's philosophies that distinguishes public affairs from public information activities. At that time, Agriculture had 21 offices (which varied from 1 to 123 employees) which disseminated information to the public. Agriculture refers to these offices as public information, not public affairs activities, because these offices explain agriculture programs to the public. Therefore, public information activities employees are not included in Agriculture's public affairs costs.

Department of Defense

For both fiscal years 1976 and 1977 the Department of Defense reported over \$20 million for public affairs costs. This figure included employee benefits as well as straight salary costs. Public Law 94-419 imposes a \$24 million ceiling on the Defense Department's public affairs expenditures. In view of the small difference between the 1976 expenditure and the legal limitation we asked the Defense Department for total public affairs costs for fiscal year 1976. The Defense Department reported that total public affairs expenditures--programs and people--exceeded \$23 million. ..

Our previous report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Expenditures for Public Affairs Activities" (B-161939, July 30, 1973), reported that Defense did not include operating costs for all promotion activities in public affairs expenditures, nor did it record all personnel costs for such activities. We reviewed selected activities which were at least partly promotional and found that costs for special aerial teams, military ceremonial bands, service museums, service-related exhibits, the Defense Information School, and Industrial College of the Armed Forces seminars were not reported by Defense as public affairs costs.

We recommended that the Defense Department reexamine its position on what it considered public affairs costs since many activities mentioned in our report met the Defense definition of public information and community relations. We also suggested that the Foreign Relations Committee clarify the types of Defense activities it expected to be reported under the limitation.

In commenting on our report, Defense stated that they believe their decision to not report costs for these other activities to the Foreign Relations Committee as public affairs costs is proper. Defense further explained that the Congressional Appropriations Committees are aware of the Defense definition of public affairs but have not suggested broadening its scope.

Others

The Civil Service Commission and General Services Administration also reported few employees in these categories. We asked officials in these agencies if they had included all employees in their figures. According to these officials, all public affairs and congressional relations employees had been reported.

As a matter of interest to you, there is no requirement that agencies specifically identify public affairs costs-- programs and people--so no central location exists in the Government where this information can be obtained. Total Government public affairs costs have previously been obtained by special studies or one-time reporting with the criteria for methods and definitions established by each report. To our knowledge, the last special study for public affairs was requested by the Office of Management and Budget in 1970, which showed public affairs obligations to be \$153 million in fiscal

year 1969. These costs included supplies, materials, and equipment, as well as personnel services and travel costs.

MILITARY RECRUITMENT COSTS

According to the Department of Defense, about \$516 million was spent for military recruiting during fiscal year 1976. This amount includes recruiting costs for both active duty and reserve forces.

A Defense official stated that the recruitment expenditures were:

<u>Active forces recruitment</u>	<u>Expenditure (millions)</u>
Military salaries for recruiters and headquarters-level employees who monitor the recruitment program	\$182.6
Salaries for civilian support	25.9
Recruiting support, such as travel, printing, auto leasing, utilities	71.4
Leasing facilities for recruiting stations	25.1
Costs for recruitment advertising	68.8
Enlistment bonuses presently offered by the Army and the Marine Corps	68.5
Travel and per diem costs for recruiter aides, who are sent to their home neighborhoods for a few weeks to assist recruiting	<u>6.2</u>
	<u>\$448.5</u>
 <u>Reserve forces recruitment</u>	
Military salaries	36.4
Civilian salaries	8.7
Recruiting support, including leasing facilities	<u>22.6</u>
	<u>\$ 67.7</u>
 Total	 <u><u>\$516.2</u></u>

AUDIOVISUAL COSTS

Audiovisual activities are defined in this report as those functions which produce and distribute audiovisual products such as motion picture films, still photos, television services, and audio services.

The General Services Administration and the Office of Management and Budget have limited information on Government audiovisual costs. Neither agency has information on annual operating costs requested by your office. An Office of Management and Budget official stated that the agencies' annual operating costs cannot be obtained because the agency accounting systems are not designed to report the information.

However, the Office of Management and Budget provided some information on audiovisual costs which they obtained from studies completed in 1974 and 1977. The first study was prepared by the Office of Telecommunications Policy and reported cost data for fiscal year 1972 from the 15 largest users of audiovisual media in the Federal Government. The second study, prepared by the Office of Management and Budget, shows costs for fiscal year 1976 and includes information on 19 Federal agencies.

Both reports contain information on the cost of obtaining audiovisual services from outside sources and the volume of in-house and contract production for different audiovisual media. We extracted data on 15 agencies from both reports so you may compare audiovisual production for fiscal years 1972 and 1976. In-house audiovisual production, contract production, and contract costs for the 15 audiovisual users are:

	<u>Inhouse</u>		<u>Contract</u>		<u>Contract cost</u>	
	<u>Running</u>		<u>Running</u>			
	<u>Time (min.)</u>		<u>Time (min.)</u>			
	<u>1972</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1976</u>
Television produc- tions	22,338	126,212	651	47,105	\$ 309,000	\$11,377,356
Motion pic- ture pro- ductions	7,453	9,249	11,192	22,100	17,555,000	16,999,361
Mixed media produc- tions	(a)	273,404	(a)	101,219	<u>1,414,000</u>	<u>2,899,413</u>
Total					<u>\$19,308,000</u>	<u>\$31,276,130</u>

a/Mixed media running time not reported in fiscal year 1972 data report.

In addition to these contract costs, the Office of Telecommunications Policy reported in January 1974 that the acquisition value of equipment owned by the 15 agencies included in their study was \$431 million as of June 30, 1972.

In a December 1975 report, the General Services Administration estimated the total Government investment in audiovisual facilities equipment and inventories to be \$1 billion and annual operating costs to be \$500 million. We could not obtain this report's backup information and therefore cannot comment on the accuracy of these estimated costs.

Our current audit plans include reviewing the utilization and effectiveness of audiovisual activities managed by agencies and the feasibility of consolidating audiovisual activities in certain geographic areas.

AGRICULTURE YEARBOOK AND FARMERS' BULLETINS COSTS

The Department of Agriculture produces both the Agriculture Yearbook and farmers' bulletins. The Agriculture Yearbook is published yearly and is part two of the annual report of the Secretary of Agriculture. The 1976 Agriculture Yearbook, "The Face of Rural America," is a hard cover publication 284 pages long. In contrast to prior yearbooks which contained reports and papers on various agricultural subjects,

the 1976 yearbook mainly contained photographs of American agriculture.

Farmers' bulletins are reprints of articles on different agricultural subjects written mainly by Agriculture employees. Farmers' bulletins cover many subjects, such as home and garden bulletins, or leaflets such as "How to Raise Strawberries," "Foundations For Farm Buildings," and "Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables." The bulletins vary from one to several pages long and are produced in single page or pamphlet form.

Both the Agriculture Yearbook and farmers' bulletins are published primarily for delivery to, or distribution for, Members of Congress.

Agriculture Yearbook

The cost of the 1976 yearbook consists of both the materials development cost and the printing cost. Total cost is approximately \$577,000.

Agriculture officials stated that the development cost of the 1976 yearbook was \$56,000, which is the salary cost for the 3 employees who put together the yearbook material. According to these officials, the reason why only employee salaries were considered development costs was that the yearbook is a collection of materials that have previously been produced by the Department or donated by land grant colleges. The Agriculture Department stated it would have reproduced this data even if no yearbook were published.

Printing cost was the major production cost of the 1976 yearbook. Actual yearbook printing was procured from a commercial printer by the Government Printing Office. According to Government Printing Office records, 286,763 yearbooks were printed costing \$520,807. This includes freight costs. The yearbooks were printed for the Department of Agriculture, the Superintendent of Documents, and other Government agencies. The number of copies and billed costs were:

Yearbook distribution to the Congress and copies retained by the Department of Agriculture is permitted by 44 U.S.C. 1301, which allows printing up to about 470,000 yearbooks for the Congress and 30,000 yearbooks for the Department of Agriculture. The minimum number of copies for the Congress for fiscal year 1977 must be no less than 232,250.

The copies made available to Members of Congress are for distribution to constituents. The copies retained by the Department of Agriculture are distributed to the press, visiting dignitaries, and various department bureaus, who in turn distribute the yearbook to land grant colleges, Department of Agriculture and Future Farmers of America libraries, and other recipients.

The Superintendent of Documents distributed 1,310 yearbooks free of charge, as required by law. Depository libraries and the Library of Congress received 1,175 and 135 respectively. The Superintendent of Documents is required by 44 U.S.C. 1905 to distribute copies of Government publications to designated depository libraries throughout the country, and 44 U.S.C. 1718 directs that copies of Government publications be furnished to the Library of Congress for official use in the District of Columbia and for publications exchange with other nations.

Yearbooks printed for other agencies were for distribution overseas or internal use. The United States Information Agency had 5,000 copies printed for distribution overseas to give key contacts in other countries a pictorial view of American agriculture. The Department of Interior required 1,113 yearbooks, which were distributed to various department offices and bureaus. Many other agencies had small quantities of the yearbook printed for their internal use.

Only 15,000 yearbooks were not given away or used internally by agencies. These were printed for sale by the Superintendent of Documents. These yearbooks are sold at the Government Printing Office bookstores or by mail by the Superintendent of Documents for \$7.30 per copy.

FARMERS BULLETINS

Funds are appropriated annually to the Department of Agriculture for production of farmers' bulletins. As authorized by 7 U.S.C. 417, four-fifths of the bulletins are to be made available to, or sent out for, Members of Congress.

According to Department of Agriculture officials, in fiscal year 1976 the Department spent about \$578,000 on bulletin production, however, this cost does not include distribution and mailing costs, which we were unable to obtain.

The farmers' bulletins are distributed free by the Agriculture Department for the Congress, in response to letters requesting information and through the Department Extension Service and Visitors Center. During fiscal year 1976, 9.3 million farmers' bulletins were distributed. Although four-fifths of these were available to the Congress, only 3.3 million were delivered to or sent out for Members of Congress. According to Agriculture officials, 3.3 million represented the total publications requested by the Congress. The remaining 6 million publications were made available for distribution to the public through:

- The Department's Extension Service, where County agents and State universities give the publications to individuals requesting information.
- The Department's Visitors Center, where the general public can obtain publications in person.
- Responding to letters from individuals.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COST
FOR THE OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Outreach Program was authorized as part of the Food Stamp Act of 1964 as amended. The act states

"* * * the State agency shall undertake effective action, including the use of services provided by other federally funded agencies and organizations, to inform low-income households concerning the availability and benefits of the food stamp program and insure the participation of eligible households * * *."

To achieve the Outreach Program's purposes, the State agencies initiate and monitor efforts to reach all potentially eligible households and provide eligible households with reasonable and convenient access to the program. In fiscal year 1976 all States, plus the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and, the Virgin Islands participated in the Outreach Program.

The Outreach Program's cost is divided between the Federal Government and participating States. The act states

"* * * the Secretary is authorized to pay to each State agency an amount equal to 50 per centum of all administrative costs including * * * the outreach * * * requirements of Section 10 of this Act * * *."

According to Department of Agriculture officials, the Department reimbursed State agencies \$968,604 for costs the State agencies incurred during fiscal year 1976. These payments partially reimbursed State agencies for the salaries of program coordinators and employees working on Outreach.

We asked Agriculture officials how they control the funds given to the States in the Outreach Program. We were told that the States must submit to Agriculture a semiannual plan of Outreach activities and a semiannual performance report. Agriculture also performs an annual financial management review of each State's use of funds.

FEDERAL ADVERTISING COSTS

The information you requested is not readily available and would require gathering data from each Government agency and bureau. To answer a similar congressional inquiry in 1975, we obtained, from 31 agencies (see enclosure II), their total advertising cost. We trust this data will meet your needs.

These 31 agencies spent \$141.6 million for advertising by private agencies in fiscal year 1974 and estimated that \$145.5 million would be spent in fiscal year 1975. In addition, the agencies spent \$47.5 million for in-house advertising during fiscal year 1974 and estimated \$53.3 million in costs for in-house advertising for fiscal year 1975. Therefore, these 31 agencies spent about \$189 million and \$199 million for fiscal years 1974 and 1975.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures - 2

Department or Agency	Fiscal Year 1976			Fiscal Year 1977		
	Public Affairs		Congressional Relations	Public Affairs		Congressional Relations
	No. Of employees	Salary	No. Of employees	Salary	No. Of employees	Salary
Department of Agriculture	8	\$ 207,962	22	\$ 523,255	10	\$ 218,594
Department of Commerce	143	3,314,054	43	901,763	145	3,409,124
Department of Defense (note a)	1,401	20,076,000	332	7,500,000	1,322	20,721,000
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (note b)	352	7,511,306	97	1,702,792	293	7,892,689
Department of Housing and Urban Development	39	923,390	26	503,854	39	983,420
Department of Interior	128	2,934,208	37	873,113	129	3,120,881
Department of Justice	113	2,466,164	55	1,144,674	121	2,648,435
Department of Labor	157	2,614,512	16	329,828	160	2,797,352
Department of State	130	2,850,500	35	853,700	126	3,012,600
Department of Transportation	281	4,300,141	24	478,672	286	4,632,254
Department of the Treasury	258	4,372,977	47	725,087	252	4,329,789
Civil Service Commission	4	80,197	5	81,983	4	81,674
Energy Research and Development Administration	74	1,824,000	25	602,000	79	2,000,000
Environmental Protection Agency	67	1,700,000	37	679,000	67	1,750,000
Federal Energy Administration (note c)	47	807,897	48	841,825	39	775,841
General Services Administration	8	163,000	11	210,400	8	174,900
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	166	3,535,116	13	385,000	168	3,983,000
United States Information Agency	15	375,270	4	76,266	16	452,732
United States Postal Service	59	1,461,040	51	815,100	55	1,409,800
Veterans Administration	46	936,814	22	465,576	47	1,070,000
Total	3,496	\$62,414,557	950	\$19,693,888	3,366	\$65,464,085
					934	\$20,126,275

a/Department of Defense salary costs include employee benefits.

b/The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare budgeted salary costs for fiscal year 1977 may include some travel, employee benefits, and/or training costs.

c/Although a few agencies had larger budgets than the Federal Energy Administration, this agency has been included at your request.

AGENCIES QUESTIONED IN 1975ABOUT ADVERTISING COSTS

1. Department of Agriculture
2. Department of Commerce
3. Department of Defense
4. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
5. Department of Housing and Urban Development
6. Department of the Interior
7. Department of Justice
8. Department of Labor
9. Department of State
10. Department of Transportation
11. Department of the Treasury
12. ACTION
13. American Revolution Bicentennial Administration
14. Commission on Civil Rights
15. Consumer Product Safety Commission
16. Council on Environmental Quality
17. Energy Research and Development Administration
18. Environmental Protection Agency
19. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
20. Federal Communications Commission
21. Federal Energy Administration
22. Interstate Commerce Commission
23. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
24. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
25. Selective Service Commission
26. Small Business Administration
27. Smithsonian Institution
28. United States Civil Service Commission
29. United States Information Agency
30. United States Postal Service
31. Veterans Administration