

**Farm Credit Administration
Office of Inspector General**

Audit Report

**Farm Credit Administration's
Employee Separation Process**

A-20-01

February 9, 2021

FCAOIG

Farm Credit Administration
Office of Inspector General



Farm Credit Administration
Office of Inspector General

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Glen R. Smith, Board Chairman
The Honorable Jeffery S. Hall, Board Member
Farm Credit Administration
1501 Farm Credit Drive
McLean, Virginia 22102-5090

Dear Chairman Smith and Board Member Hall:

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) completed an audit on the Farm Credit Administration's (FCA or Agency) employee separation process. The objective of this audit was to determine whether FCA has an efficient and effective process for separating employees. In order to address the objective, we analyzed the efficiency and effectiveness of the separation processes currently in place, such as the notification and checkout processes, and also reviewed the number, type, and other details of separating employees, to understand the impact of such data on the Agency.

Our audit found that the Agency had made enhancements to the separation process, including establishing policies and procedures and improving the checkout record form. There were also more employees completing the exit survey questionnaire than in previous years. However, we identified certain areas that will improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the separating process, including: improvements to the Personnel Action Report process, clarifications on the exit survey and interview process, and a more consistent application of the checkout documentation and retention of checkout records requirements.

We made six recommendations in our audit. Management agreed with the first recommendation. Although management only partially agreed with recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the actions completed or planned address the weaknesses found in our report and the corresponding recommendations. Due to the corrective actions implemented over the course of our audit, we consider recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5 closed.

We appreciate the courtesies and professionalism extended by FCA to our staff during the audit, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have any questions about this audit, we would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sonya K. Cerne'.

Sonya K. Cerne
Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Farm Credit Administration's Employee Separation Process

Report No. A-20-01

February 9, 2021

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine whether the Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) has an efficient and effective process for separating employees.

Recommendations

Based on our review, we made six recommendations to improve the separation and data collection process:

1. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services update Policies and Procedures Manual 834 to reflect the Personnel Action Report process, update responsibilities and references, and document the exit interview process.
2. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services update the Office of Agency Services Directive 007 to reflect current processes in the separation process.
3. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services implement additional controls over the Personnel Action Report entries and the employee checkout forms. This may include annual reviews, inclusion in the internal control review cycle, supervisory review, or other controls deemed necessary by the Office of Agency Services.
4. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services determine records retention practices for information kept on exiting personnel including, but not limited to, checkout forms, exit surveys, and interview documentation, and update record retention policies and procedures as needed.
5. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services evaluate the exit survey and interview process to assess the efficacy of the questions and the feedback.
6. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services implement a plan on how the Agency will use the exit survey and interview data to include analyzing and comparing trends in employee separations and reporting or briefing the information to key Agency officials at a designated interval.

FCA is an independent federal agency responsible for regulating, examining, and supervising the Farm Credit System (System) and the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac). The Agency's mission is to ensure that System institutions and Farmer Mac are safe, sound, and dependable sources of credit and related services for all creditworthy and eligible persons in agriculture and rural America. The most important part to achieving the mission is the FCA employees. Hiring and maintaining a workforce is imperative to fulfilling the mission.

FCA generally has about 312 employees. Each year, the Agency loses employees to separations for a variety of reasons such as retirements, transfers, and resignations. During this audit, we found the Agency had established policies and procedures for the separation process. The Agency also made improvements to the checkout record form and more people were completing the exit survey questionnaire than in previous years. The Agency also established access controls for the exit questionnaire data and performed an analysis in 2019 using exit survey data.

While the Agency has made certain enhancements, there are opportunities to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the separating process. We identified improvements that need to be made to the Personnel Action Report process. We also found clarification is needed on the exit survey and interview process and that there is an inconsistent approach to properly separating employees. Therefore, we made six recommendations to improve documentation, enhance controls, and clearly document the Agency's use of the exit survey and interview data.

Strengthening the process can reduce the amount of errors relating to the out-processing of employees. Enhancing the data collection and analysis efforts can allow the Agency to understand potential strengths and weaknesses of the work environment.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Agency or FCA | Farm Credit Administration |
| Farmer Mac | Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| HR | Human Resources |
| MCP | Management Control Plan |
| OAS | Office of Agency Services |
| OCFO | Office of the Chief Financial Officer |
| OE | Office of Examination |
| OGC | Office of General Counsel |
| OIT | Office of Information Technology |
| OIG | Office of Inspector General |
| PAR | Personnel Action Report |
| PPM | Policies and Procedures Manual |
| System | Farm Credit System |

BACKGROUND

The Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) is an independent federal agency responsible for regulating, examining, and supervising the Farm Credit System (System) and the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac). The Agency's mission is to ensure that System institutions and Farmer Mac are safe, sound, and dependable sources of credit and related services for all creditworthy and eligible persons in agriculture and rural America.

The most important part to achieving the mission is the FCA employees, and hiring and maintaining a workforce is imperative to fulfilling the mission. FCA generally has about 312 employees. Each year, the Agency loses employees for a variety of reasons such as retirements, transfers, and resignations. In its Strategic Plan for 2018-2023, the Agency states that human capital challenges, including the need to recruit and retain a diverse, talented workforce, will continue. The Strategic Plan also states that FCA may lose many seasoned, knowledgeable employees because of retirements and attrition over the planning horizon.

The Office of Agency Services (OAS) manages and delivers human capital and administrative services for FCA through three teams: Human Resources (HR) Division, Operations Division, and Learning and Organizational Change Team. Services provided by OAS include staffing and placement services for the Agency. For employee separations, OAS also completes personnel actions and enters information into the Personnel Action Report (PAR) to initiate the overall separation process. OAS also provides information to employees when leaving the Agency and maintains most separation documentation.

FCA documents the process for separating employees in three primary documents:

- Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) 834, *Exit Procedures*, March 7, 2003. PPM 834 outlines responsibilities for supervisors, employees, and OAS¹ during the employee separation process.
- OAS Directive 007, *Separating Employees Clearance Process*, April 21, 2009. The directive outlines internal responsibilities within OAS for the checkout process.
- FCA Form 302, *Employee Checkout Form*, December 2019. The form outlines the checkout process and instructs employees, and others with a checkout role within the Agency, on proper steps to take relating to Agency separations.

Prior Reviews

In February 2016, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) completed a related audit, ***Human Capital Planning at the Farm Credit Administration***. The objectives of this audit were to assess the adequacy of the Agency's human capital planning and the effectiveness of its implementation. The audit focused on three areas of human capital planning: key person dependencies and succession planning, employee hiring and separation, and workplace diversity and inclusion.

Our report made the 11 recommendations listed below that the Agency agreed to, implemented, and closed by September 2016.

1. Formalize the human capital planning process.
2. Track data on succession planning efforts. Document the strategies to mitigate the risks. Monitor and follow-up to capture and utilize results.
3. Assess organizational leadership and development programs and modify to promote, enhance, and improve initiatives within the Agency.
4. Coordinate and revise the network distribution list for FCA job announcements.
5. Increase coordination between the Office of Management Services and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion on special emphasis programs and outreach.

¹ PPM 834 references the Office of Management Services, which existed prior to the Office Agency Services and housed HR functions. In 2016, the Office of Management Services was reorganized into the Office of Agency Services and Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

6. Implement a plan to improve the exit interview process and disperse exit interview data to gather consistent, useful information for comparison and trends.
7. Consider a veterans' representative for Agency veteran efforts.
8. Provide training to all personnel involved in the recruiting and hiring process on potential biases and barriers to employment.
9. Conduct an assessment of FCA hiring practices to identify potential barriers and areas of improvement.
10. Establish a policy that includes the plan for requesting and analyzing applicant flow data for FCA job announcements.
11. Conduct a survey, or use other information-gathering tools, to gather additional targeted information on workplace diversity and inclusion.

The OIG also identified human capital in the 2020 OIG Management Challenges Report as a challenge area. The OIG report noted that a significant management challenge for FCA is maintaining a safe, well-trained, sustainable workforce while facing challenges in retirement eligibilities, succession planning and training, and diversity. The report also stated that the Agency's success depends greatly on its ability to recruit, retain, and develop a capable workforce.

AUDIT RESULTS

The objective of this audit was to determine whether FCA has an efficient and effective process for separating employees. In order to address the objective, we analyzed the efficiency and effectiveness of the separation processes currently in place, such as the notification and checkout processes, and also reviewed the number, type, and other details on separating employees, to understand the impact of such data on the Agency. Overall, we found there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process.

The Agency established policies and procedures for the separation process. The Agency also made improvements to the checkout record form and more people were completing the exit survey questionnaire than in previous years. The Agency also established access controls for the exit questionnaire data and performed an analysis in 2019 using exit survey data. While the Agency has made certain enhancements, there are certain steps that need to be addressed to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the separating process. We identified improvements that need to be made to the PAR process. We also found that clarification is needed on the exit survey and interview process and that the checkout documentation and retention of checkout records requirements were inconsistently applied.

Employee Separation Process

There are a variety of reasons an employee would leave the Agency. Employees may have reached the end of their career and elect to retire, or others may leave for a different job opportunity. When an employee elects to separate, the Agency initiates a separation action. The Agency's

separation actions are coded using Office of Personnel Management guidelines. The following are the types of separations found during our review of Agency personnel actions:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Death-an employee passes away while in Federal service | Resignation-a separation initiated by the employee who is leaving Federal service | Retirement-an employee is retiring from Federal service |
| Termination of Appointment-the employee is leaving the Agency after a temporary appointment or during a probationary period | Termination Appointment In-an employee is leaving for another Federal agency | Removal-a separation initiated by the Agency, the Office of Personnel Management, or the Merit Systems Protection Board under certain provisions. |

When an employee plans to separate, OAS is notified by the employee's office within the Agency. The office provides written notice stating an employee is leaving or provides a Standard Form-52, which is a request for personnel action, to HR. HR then completes the required documentation, if not provided by the office, and assesses the effective date when the employee will be leaving the Agency. An HR Specialist then enters the information into the PAR listing.²

The PAR documents certain personnel actions such as hiring, resignations, promotions, separations, and reassignments. The Agency began using an electronic version of the PAR in July 2016. The information is housed internally and those with access can see all PAR actions. The PAR contains effective dates of the action, names of the employees, organizational data, titles, and other important information. Offices involved in the checkout process, such as the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the ethics staff in the Office of General Counsel (OGC), use the information in the PAR to initiate their own actions, including interviews and account terminations.

The Agency requires separating employees to complete a Form 302 as a record of the checkout process. The form states that employees are responsible for obtaining the clearances in the form before their final day in the office. Employees in the field offices or on permanent flexiplace collect required signatures by circulating the checkout form via email to the appropriate offices. The form

² The PAR listing is not the official separation documentation. The PAR is an internal listing specific to FCA that provides notification of separation actions to those persons or offices in the Agency with a need to know. The official documentation of separating employees is completed by OAS with the National Finance Center, which is a service provider for the Agency for finance and human resource management services.

provides instructions for employees and supervisors and includes numerous signoffs for various offices, including OAS, OIT, OGC, and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). The employee signs and certifies the following on the form:

"I certify I have removed all FCA owned software, documents and data from my personal devices (personal computer, phone, USB drive, etc.), and that I have submitted my completed checkout form and government ID badge to the appropriate Field Office Administrative Assistant (field offices) or the Human Resources Office (McLean)."

Once the form is complete, HR personnel, or another authorized official, provides a final signature on the form. The Payroll Officer in HR collects the form and files the hard copy in a storage cabinet. For those received electronically, the forms are printed and placed in the cabinet.

During the checkout process, employees are also given two separate opportunities to provide feedback on their employment at FCA. The first is a voluntary exit survey. When an employee is leaving the Agency, an exit survey link is issued to employees with other separation information. The survey contains 25 questions and, if the employee elects to participate, the survey responses are placed in an internal site. The site contains survey responses from March 2014 to present. Employees may also request a one-on-one interview with HR personnel to discuss their experiences.³ In a compilation sent to the OIG, the document showed 14 questions were asked to employees that requested the interview. These interviews are not entered into a system and are maintained in hard copy form.

FCA Employee Data

In order to put employee separations into perspective, it is important to understand the overall organization of the Agency. HR provided the OIG with historical employee statistics for the number of employees by office. On average, the Agency has about 312 employees, with the majority of staff in the Office of Examination (OE). The following chart shows the number of employees by office as of the end of each fiscal year over the last four years.⁴

Number of Employees by Office and Fiscal Year End for 2017-2020

| Office | 9/30/2017 | 9/30/2018 | 9/30/2019 | 9/30/2020 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Office of Agency Services | 19 | 21 | 22 | 16 |
| Office of Congressional and Public Affairs | 8 | 6 | 5 | 6 |

³ Employees are also given information to contact the OIG if they suspect or have knowledge of fraud, waste, abuse of authority, mismanagement, or other wrongdoing.

⁴ The numbers presented in the chart include part-time employees but do not include vacancies within offices .

| | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Office of Data Analytics and Economics | N/A | N/A | N/A | 7 |
| Office of Examination | 178 | 194 | 182 | 192 |
| Office of General Counsel | 13 | 14 | 10 | 11 |
| Office of Information Technology | 26 | 30 | 31 | 31 |
| Office of Inspector General ⁵ | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Office of Regulatory Policy | 26 | 25 | 28 | 20 |
| Office of Secondary Market Oversight | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Office of the Board | 7 | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| Office of the Chief Executive Officer | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Office of the Chief Financial Officer | 8 | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| Totals | 299 | 323 | 310 | 317 |

PAR Data

During the audit, we identified improvements that need to be made to the PAR process due to errors in the listing. We reviewed and analyzed the PAR data to test for accuracy and understand the separation process and the impact separations have on the Agency. We exported the PAR data and limited our analysis to 2017, 2018, and 2019 data⁶ with resignations, retirements, terminations, deaths, and removal actions.⁷

The PAR data was compared to FCA's Employee Reports for 2017, 2018, and 2019. FCA's Employee Reports show changes in the workforce each year and recognize employees who left the Agency. For each entry on the PAR data, employees were compared to the employee report to determine if employees were listed on the report and not the PAR. For 2017 and 2018, there were no exceptions. For 2019, however, there were three employees that separated from the Agency that

⁵ The OIG was not included in the audit.

⁶ The data was analyzed by calendar year, not fiscal year. The overall scope of the audit covered three years, from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019.

⁷ All OIG actions were removed from the data set. In addition, no interns or student trainees were included. The data includes the FCA Board and their personnel.

had not been included in the PAR. When discussed with HR, the missing actions were identified as errors in the PAR.⁸

In total, there were 79 separations within the scope of the audit (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019) based on the PAR listing and information from HR on the three employees missing from the PAR. In addition to the three missing employees, 27 separations contained missing PAR information, although most of the missing elements were grade levels and/or job series.⁹ There was also a duplicate entry for an employee that had been entered on the PAR twice for the same separation action.¹⁰ For the missing and incorrect PAR data, HR provided the correct information that was then added to the OIG analysis.

Employee Separations

In order to understand the impact of employee separations on the Agency, we analyzed the separations by year, type of separation, office, series, and location, using data from the PAR and HR personnel. The analysis showed that the overall number of employees separating varied each year but increased in 2019. In 2017, the data showed 25 separations, 18 in 2018, and 36 in 2019. The number in 2019 doubled from the number of 2018 separations, accounting for 46 percent of the separations over the 3-year period.

Number of Employee Separations for 2017-2019

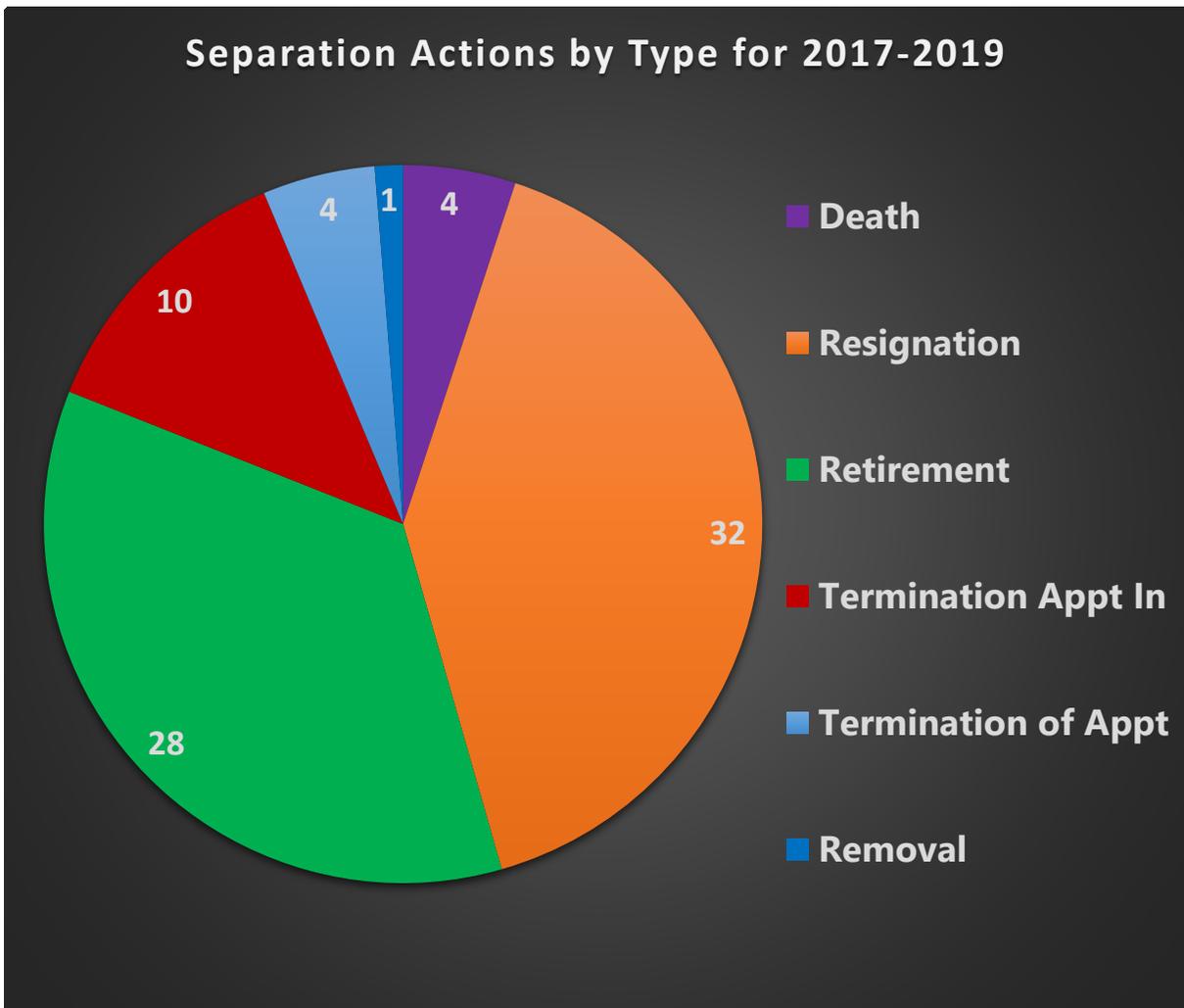
| Year | Number of Separations |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 2017 | 25 |
| 2018 | 18 |
| 2019 | 36 |
| Total | 79 |

⁸ Although the employees were missing from the PAR, HR personnel stated that the official separation paperwork for these employees was completed with the National Finance Center.

⁹ The OIG exported the data directly from the internal site that houses the PAR data. Although we retrieved this information directly from the site, the missing information shows a lack of integrity in the data. The OIG requested the missing information from HR and analyzed the data with the original PAR data and the supplemented information from HR. While we requested and discussed the missing information, we did not validate the existing data in the PAR with other source documentation; therefore, the analysis is limited.

¹⁰ After confirmation with HR, the duplicate entry was removed from the analysis.

We analyzed the data set to determine the types of actions most prevalent for separation actions. The data showed that most separations at the Agency were due to resignations, where an employee resigns from federal service, and retirements. Resignations were the most common type with 32 of the 79 separations, or about 41 percent of all separations reviewed. Retirements accounted for 28 out of the 79 separations, or about 35 percent. The other types of separations that accounted for the remaining 24 percent of departing employees included 1 removal, 4 terminations of appointment (where an action is initiated to end a probationary or other temporary appointment and is identified as Termination of Appt), 10 terminations where the employee left for another government agency (identified as Termination Appt In), and 4 deaths.



The number of separations by office over the three-year period was also analyzed. In order to show the sizes of the offices within the Agency, the following chart lists each FCA office's number of employees as of September 2020. Although this number is a point-in-time snapshot of employees, it shows the general percentage of employees by office in relation to the total Agency size.¹¹

Number of Employees by Office and Percent of Total Agency Size

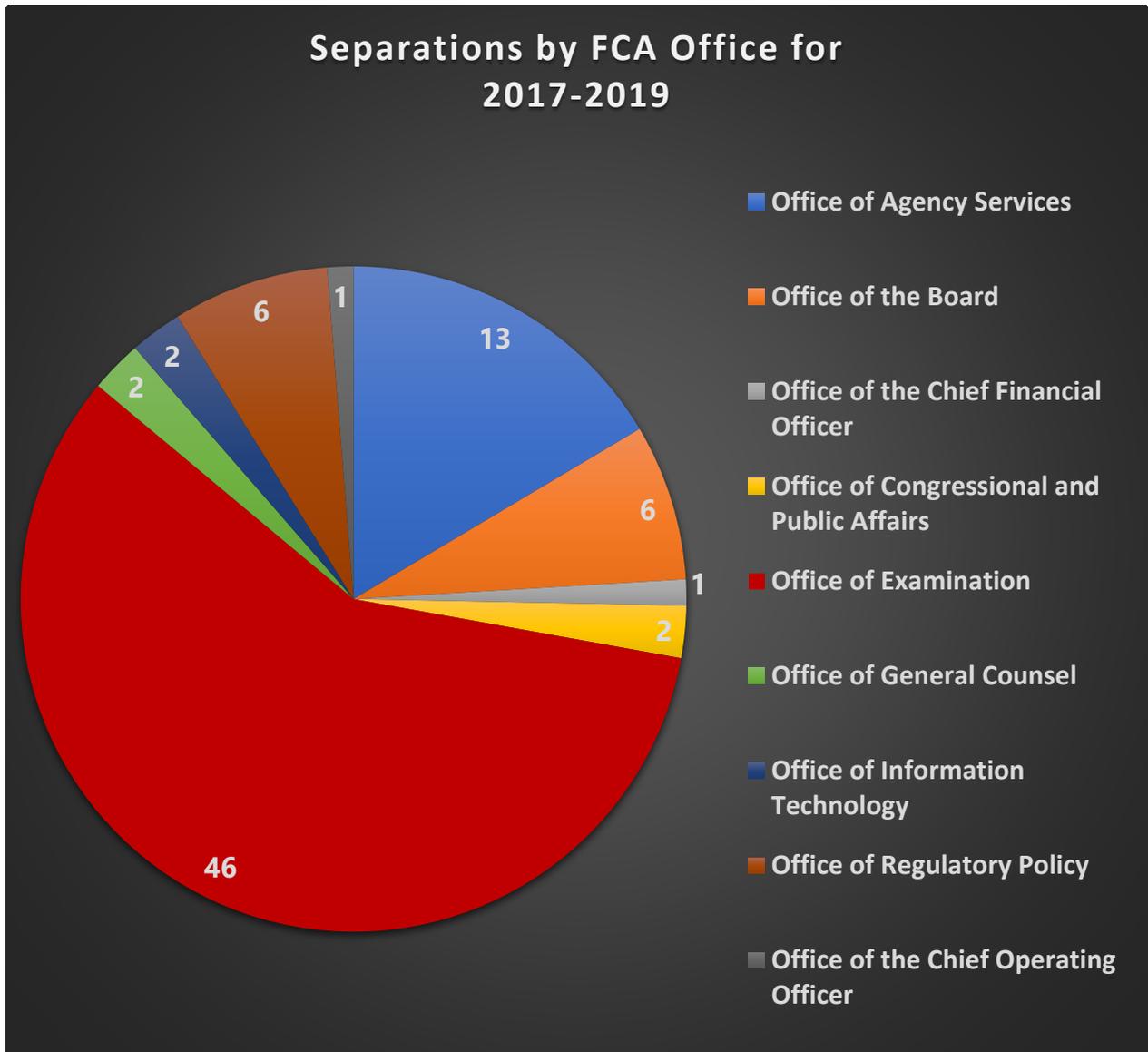
| FCA Office | Total Number of Employees | Percent of Total Employees for Agency (Rounded) |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Office of Agency Services | 16 | 5% |
| Office of Congressional and Public Affairs | 6 | 2% |
| Office of Data Analytics and Economics ¹² | 7 | 2% |
| Office of Examination | 192 | 61% |
| Office of General Counsel | 11 | 3% |
| Office of Information Technology | 31 | 10% |
| Office of Inspector General ¹³ | 6 | 2% |
| Office of Regulatory Policy | 20 | 6% |
| Office of Secondary Market Oversight | 4 | 1% |
| Office of the Board | 9 | 3% |
| Office of the Chief Executive Officer | 4 | 1% |
| Office of the Chief Financial Officer | 11 | 3% |
| Totals | 317 | |

¹¹ The numbers in the chart include part-time employees but do not include vacancies within an office .

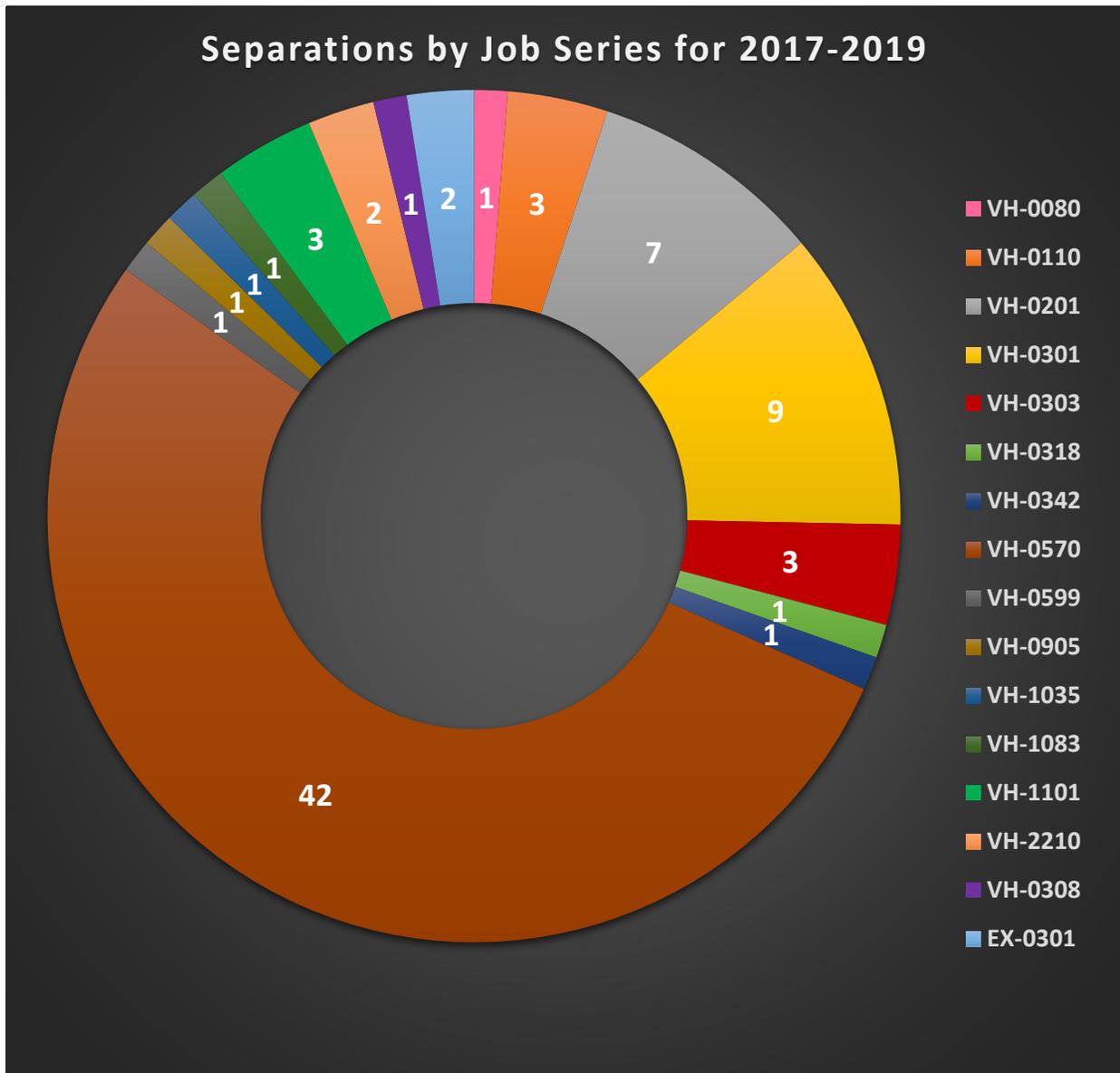
¹² The Office of Data Analytics and Economics was established in 2019.

¹³ OIG personnel were not included in the audit samples.

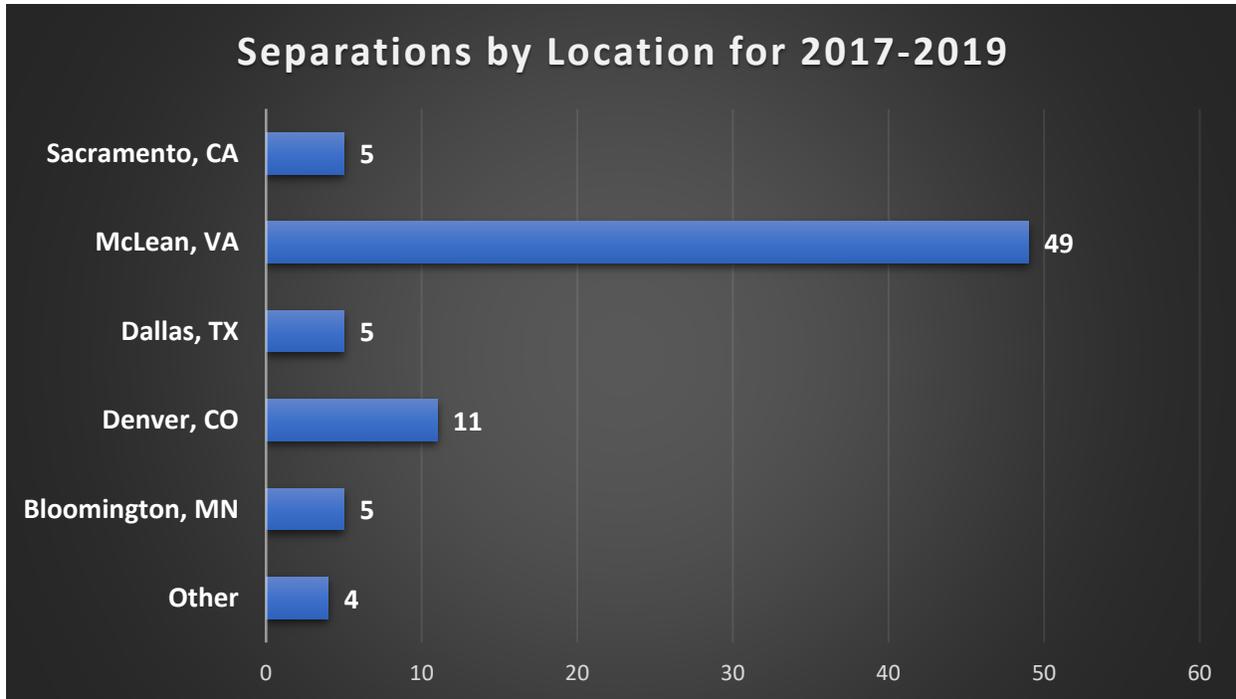
For separations, the OE accounted for the most separations with 46 of the 79, or about 58 percent of the total separations. As shown above, OE, on average, accounts for about 61 percent of total Agency personnel. OAS accounted for the next highest number of separations with 13 of the 79, or about 16 percent of the total separations. OAS generally accounts for about 5 percent of total Agency personnel. The Office of the Board and the Office of Regulatory Policy each accounted for 8 percent of the total separations and the separations from all other offices accounted for the remaining 10 percent.



The data was analyzed to determine the job series of separated employees at the Agency based on the data provided. The data showed that the 42 of the 79 separations were in the 0570 series (Financial Institution Examining Series). The next highest separations, with 9 of the 79 separations, were in the 0301 series (Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series) and 7 of the 79 separations were in the 0201 series (Human Resources Management Series). The other 21 separations were in 13 different series listed in the chart below.



We also analyzed the data on separations by location of staff. FCA has its headquarters and one field office in McLean, Virginia. FCA also has field offices in Bloomington, Minnesota; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; and Sacramento, California. The data showed that the majority of separations, 49 of the 79 separations, or about 62 percent of the total separations, were from Mclean. The Denver office accounted for 11 of the 79 separations, and the Bloomington, Dallas, and Sacramento offices each had 5 separations. The remaining 4 separations were from "other" locations. These are locations of individuals that are not assigned to one of the offices, such as those employees on permanent flexiplace.



Exit Surveys and Interviews

We also found that clarification is needed on exit survey and interview processes. When an employee is leaving the Agency, an exit survey link is issued to the employee with other separation information. Employees can voluntarily complete the survey and their responses are housed in an internal listing created in 2014. The exit survey contains 25 questions about employee experiences, reasons for leaving the Agency, and other important information (see the question list at Appendix A). However, we were unable to locate documentation describing the exit survey process, what the Agency is doing with the data, and when the data would be purged from the system based on record retention.¹⁴

¹⁴ As noted in subsequent sections of this report, there has been significant turnover and restructuring in OAS over the last few years. The lack of documented processes and turnover in staff creates a lack of historical knowledge on how processes were designed and implemented. For example, OAS did not know whether the survey questions were originally developed internally or by an outside consultant.

We reviewed the exit survey responses submitted from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019.¹⁵ We found that employees were not always completing the exit survey. In fact, there were 21 total responses for the three-year period, with only two entries each year in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, there were 17 survey responses. While the increased participation in the survey is a positive trend, additional measures can be taken within the checkout process to further encourage employees to complete the questionnaire.

OAS completed an analysis of the exit survey information submitted by 45 former employees from March 24, 2014 through September 11, 2019 in a 2019 report. The report was sent to the Chief Human Capital Officer and then to the Chief Operating Officer. However, when asked if there were other reports or analyses performed on a regular basis on the exit survey or separating employees' interviews, multiple personnel stated they were unaware of any other analyses or reports. In addition, OAS personnel were unaware of any requests for the exit survey data. During our interviews, it was unclear if the Agency had intentions of using the data collected in the surveys.

Exit Survey Data

We analyzed the exit survey questionnaire data. We judgmentally sampled¹⁶ 5 of the 25 questions from the exit survey responses for analysis. In addition, because the 2019 report by OAS covered a larger data set, we limited the analysis in this area. The following shows some of the information provided from the survey responses of the 21 employees:

- When asked how many years they had worked at FCA, 3 employees responded that they had over 30 years of service at FCA, 16 of the 21 had five years or less at FCA, and 2 had 11-25 years at FCA.

Responses by Number of Years at FCA

| Responses¹⁷ | How many years have you worked at FCA? |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 year or less | 4 |
| More than 1 but less than 2 years | 2 |
| 2-3 years | 6 |
| 4-5 years | 4 |

¹⁵ The OIG pulled the survey responses directly from the internal site. All names were removed from the data and no responses from former OIG employees were reviewed.

¹⁶ Judgmental sampling is a

¹⁷ The survey contained additional responses that covered years 0-34. However, years with no responses were not included in the list.

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 11-15 years | 1 |
| 21-25 years | 1 |
| 31-34 years | 3 |
| Grand Total | 21 |

- When asked how many years, including military service, they had worked in the federal government, 12 employees responded with 5 years or less, 5 had been in the federal government for 6-20 years, and 4 had completed over 30 years of federal service.

Responses by Number of Years worked for Federal Government

| Responses | How many years (including military service) have you worked for the federal government? |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 year or less | 3 |
| More than 1 but less than 2 years | 2 |
| 2-3 years | 4 |
| 4-5 years | 3 |
| 6-10 years | 2 |
| 11-15 years | 2 |
| 16-20 years | 1 |
| 31-34 years | 4 |
| Grand Total | 21 |

- When the 21 respondents were asked if they would like to return to FCA, 9 of the employees answered positively with "definitely yes," "probably yes" or "possibly yes;" 7 employees answered neutrally with "no answer" or "uncertain;" and 5 employees answered negatively with "definitely no" or "probably no."

Responses by Number of Employees that Would Like to Return to FCA

| Responses | Would you like to return to FCA? |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Definitely no | 2 |
| Definitely yes | 2 |
| No answer | 1 |
| Possibly yes | 6 |
| Probably no | 3 |
| Probably yes | 1 |
| Uncertain | 6 |
| Grand Total | 21 |

- When asked what they would be doing when they leave FCA, the 21 respondents answered in a variety of ways, including some with multiple answers:
 - 4 were attending school;
 - 4 were retiring;
 - 6 were taking a private sector position;
 - 2 were moving to another federal agency;
 - 1 was moving to a state or local government position; and
 - 4 selected more than one response.

Responses by Plans After Leaving FCA

| Responses | What will you be doing when you leave FCA? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY) |
|---|--|
| Attending school | 4 |
| Resigning (but not accepting another position); AND Attending school | 1 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Resigning (but not accepting another position); AND Transferring to a position in another federal agency | 1 |
| Retiring | 4 |
| Retiring; AND Taking a position in the not-for- profit sector | 1 |
| Taking a position in a state or local government | 1 |
| Taking a position in the private sector | 6 |
| Taking a position in the private sector; AND Don't know | 1 |
| Transferring to a position in another federal agency | 2 |
| Grand Total | 21 |

- When asked their location, 9 respondents were from McLean, 2 from Bloomington, 4 from Dallas, 2 from Denver, and 3 from Sacramento. One employee did not respond to the question.

Responses by Location of Employee

| Responses | Where are you located? |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Bloomington | 2 |
| Dallas | 4 |
| Denver | 2 |
| McLean | 9 |
| Sacramento | 3 |
| Grand Total | 20 |

In addition, HR gives an option to separating employees to request a one-on-one interview with the HR Supervisor. HR personnel stated the same set of questions is asked to all employees and the information is kept in hard-copy form. HR provided an example of a compilation of the questions that was completed for four employees' interviews. The question set is listed in Appendix B. The HR Supervisor stated the responses are given to the Chief Human Capital Officer,

if warranted. However, again, the process is not documented to explain how the Agency is using the information, what types of information would need to be elevated, and what happens to the information over time.

Checkout Records

Based on the testing performed during the audit, we found an inconsistent approach to properly separating employees. The Agency requires separating employees to complete a Form 302 as a record of the checkout process. The form provides instructions for employees and supervisors and includes numerous signoffs for various offices, including OAS, OIT, OGC, and OCFO. Once the form is complete, HR, or authorized officials, provides a final signature on the form. The Payroll Officer in HR collects the form and files the hard copy in a storage cabinet. For those received electronically, they are printed and placed in the cabinet.

Checkout records are especially important because they ensure that employees and those with certain roles and responsibilities in the Agency take proper steps prior to separation. For example, the checkout records contain a signoff by OAS that employees returned FCA property. The ethics staff also sign off that applicable ethics counseling was provided.¹⁸ Other signatures, such as the OIT signoffs, ensure the Agency removes the separating employee's accesses and terminates accounts as necessary.

To test the current process with checkouts, we judgmentally sampled 18 employee checkout records from the PAR data from 2017-2019. The sampled checkout forms contained missing and incomplete information or, in some cases, were not found at all. Of the 18 sampled records, 10 were provided to the OIG for the audit; however, the remaining 8 checkout forms were not provided to our office. OAS personnel stated the Agency follows the General Records Schedule and retains the checkout forms for one year after the employee separates from the Agency. Of the 18 checkout records requested, OAS stated 3 records were purged according to the records retention policy. All three separations were from 2017 and correspond to the applicable schedule given to the OIG. However, this was not consistently applied as four forms from 2017 and 2018 were provided to us that should have been purged.

Two checkout forms were not provided due to the employees' deaths. OAS noted that in cases of a death-in-service, a checkout record is not completed. However, we disagree that a checkout form is not necessary since documenting returned property, access removals, and other information is still needed when an employee is no longer at the Agency. Although outdated, OAS Directive 007 states that a separation may occur where it is impossible for employees to complete the process and specifically lists an employee death as an example. The directive gives instructions on what personnel should file in these circumstances. OAS needs to clearly document how the separation process works if the employee is unable to complete the form.

Three other checkout forms from 2019 were not located. For one, OAS stated a form was not completed "due to the type of separation." The type of separation should not dictate whether the checkout process is performed unless the employee is unable to do so. In such cases, OAS, or the

¹⁸ FCA has several ethics policies and post-employment restrictions that may affect certain individuals.

field office personnel, should complete the form or designate someone to complete the process. HR was unable to find the two other forms.

In addition, for the 10 forms provided in the sample, important signoffs were missing, as noted below.

- 9 of the 10 were missing one or more authorizing officials required on the form. Missing information included property, employee, finance team and/or ethics certifications.
- 8 of the 10 did not contain a final signature from HR or an OAS representative.
- 4 of the 10 were missing the employee's final signature.

Contributing Factors

During the audit, we identified several causes that contributed to the inconsistencies and exceptions in the separation process. First, we found that policies and procedures were outdated, did not document current processes, and contained conflicting information. PPM 834 sets forth the procedures to be followed when employees leave the Agency. However, the PPM contains outdated references to the Office of Management Services (now OAS) and is inconsistent with the Agency's Checkout Form 302. PPM 834 lacks detail for employees, supervisors, and authorizing officials in the checkout process to fully understand the roles and responsibilities of those involved. For example, PPM 834 does not discuss the electronic PAR process or how the information will be stored or maintained. OAS Directive 007 also contains outdated references to procedures that no longer exist and is inconsistent with the Agency's Checkout Form 302. Neither PPM 834 nor OAS Directive 007 describe the exit survey process or how information will be maintained, analyzed, and reported.

In addition, there has been significant turnover and restructuring in OAS over the last five years. In 2016, the Office of Management Services was split into OAS and OCFO. In addition to the major restructuring, OAS had several HR Specialists and Payroll Officers that separated from the Agency. The attrition in staff may have contributed to the inconsistencies noted in our audit and underscores the importance of having updated, documented processes in place at the Agency.

As far as weaknesses in the PAR data and checkout forms process, we found a lack of controls in place to ensure that separations are accurate and complete. For example, the PAR listing relies on entries that are generally performed by one HR Specialist (with no review). Similarly, the checkout completion is generally performed by the Payroll Officer (with no review). The Agency needs to implement a review process, audit, or other type of control to ensure that the entries are accurate, and the separation process is followed.

Each FCA office is required to develop and maintain a Management Control Plan (MCP) that provides reasonable assurance that the internal controls over operational, reporting, and compliance objectives are designed and operating effectively and efficiently. The MCP summarizes each office's area of responsibility that have been identified as requiring assessment (assessable units), corresponding review elements, risk ratings, and review cycles. When reviewing OAS's portion of the MCP, we found that OAS did not list an assessable unit specific to the

separating employee process. However, there was one unit that appeared to be relatable to the separating employees process, which was the personnel records and electronic official personnel folder unit. This area is rated as low, which means an internal control review would be conducted every three years. Although the separation process was not included in the reviews conducted in this area, OAS could consider adding testing of the separation process to the internal control review process.

We also identified that a lack of planning and requirements for the analysis and reporting of the data collection efforts contributed to some of the data collection, storage, retention, analysis, and reporting concerns. The Agency follows the General Records Schedule for exit forms with a one-year retention period, but it is unclear how long the exit surveys and interview information will be maintained. The documentation and data collected will need to be collected and maintained in a manner that is consistent with the records retention schedule and with clearly identified business needs. Without a clear plan for the data sets, processes become inconsistent and potentially unusable. The Agency made advancements in the data collection by establishing an internal site for the surveys and having a consistent approach to one-on-one interviews for comparisons and trending purposes. However, not having a plan for analyzing and reporting the data, such as an annual reporting or briefing requirement on analyses performed, to senior management, the Chief Operating Officer, and the FCA Board, brings into question whether the Agency's collection and storage of separation data information is useful. The Agency will need to reevaluate the exit survey and interview questions to ensure the overall process from question design to debriefing the results is effective and documented.

Conclusion

The employee separation process is an important function to ensure FCA equipment is returned, accesses are terminated, employees are properly counseled before leaving, and employee feedback is collected, analyzed, and reported. Strengthening the process can reduce the amount of errors relating to the out-processing of employees. The separation process also gives the Agency a unique opportunity to capture employees' thoughts and experiences while at FCA. Enhancing the analysis and reporting of separation data to key Agency officials enables the Agency to better understand the potential strengths and weaknesses of the work environment, including: fostering more effective recruitment and retention efforts; spotting red flags in management problems, such as a culture of fear, a cavalier attitude towards abiding by the rules, and a lack of ethical compasses; and improving productivity and morale.

Recommendations 1-6

To strengthen the separation process, we made the following recommendations:

1. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services update Policies and Procedures Manual 834 to reflect the Personnel Action Report process, update responsibilities and references, and document the exit interview process.
2. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services update the Office of Agency Services Directive 007 to reflect current processes in the separation process.

3. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services implement additional controls over the Personnel Action Report entries and the employee checkout forms. This may include annual reviews, inclusion in the internal control review cycle, supervisory review, or other controls deemed necessary by the Office of Agency Services.
4. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services determine records retention practices for information kept on exiting personnel including, but not limited to, checkout forms, exit surveys, and interview documentation, and update record retention policies and procedures as needed.
5. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services evaluate the exit survey and interview process to assess the efficacy of the questions and the feedback.
6. The Office of Inspector General recommends the Office of Agency Services implement a plan on how the Agency will use the exit survey and interview data to include analyzing and comparing trends in employee separations and reporting or briefing the information to key Agency officials at a designated interval.

FCA Response

FCA management agreed, or partially agreed, with the six recommendations. Management revised PPM 834 to include guidance on the required entries for separating employees into the PAR; the roles and responsibilities of Agency staff; updated references and associated hyperlinks for ease of reference; and an annual reporting requirement to the Chief Executive Officer through the Chief Operating Officer on exit survey and interview data. OAS will also develop a reporting template and issue a report on agency exit data no later than March 31, 2021, and annually thereafter. OAS will also solicit feedback from appropriate office contacts on the exit data analysis performed by OAS.

In addition, OAS management stated it successfully coordinated and piloted the electronic routing of Form 302 using an internal routing system. Management stated the electronic routing of the form will support Agency staff with more expeditiously obtaining required signatures and effectively controlling routing and retention of the required documentation consistent with records retention policies. Management also stated that the Associate Director for Human Resources will continue to work with staff on appropriate process enhancements identified through periodic supervisory reviews. References to the exit questionnaire were also added to PPM 834 and Form 302 to reinforce the significance of employee feedback.

Management stated Directive 007 has been redirected to OIT. As of 2020, the records management function for the Agency moved to OIT and due to the nature of Directive 007 with records management, OAS will no longer maintain the directive. However, OAS will ensure separation related documentation storage is consistent with the Agency record retention policies and will purge existing records accordingly.

OIG Response

The OIG finds the actions responsive to our recommendations. Management agreed with recommendation 1. Although management only partially agreed with recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the actions completed or planned by OAS address the weaknesses found in our report and the corresponding recommendations. Further, due to the corrective actions implemented over the course of our audit, we consider recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 5 closed.

Management comments can be found in the subsequent section of the report. The Agency waived an exit conference.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

Memorandum

1501 Farm Credit Drive
McLean, Virginia 221025090
(703) 883-4000



January 27, 2021

To: Sonya Cerne, AIG for Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations
FCA Office of Inspector General

From: Vonda K. Bell, Director of the Office of Agency Services and
Chief Human Capital Officer *Vonda K. Bell*

Subject: Office of Agency Services' Response to OIG's draft audit report titled *Farm Credit Administration's Employee Separation Process*

This memorandum responds to the draft audit report from the Office of the Inspector General, dated January 15, 2021, titled, *Farm Credit Administration's Employee Separation Process*. The stated objective of the audit was to determine whether the Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) has an efficient and effective process for separating employees.

The draft audit report includes six (6) recommendations to improve FCA's employee separation process. The Office of Agency Services (OAS) provides the following updates:

1. Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) 834, Exit Procedures has been revised to include clear guidance on the required entries for separating employees into the Personnel Action Report (PAR), provide clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Agency staff, update references and provide associated hyperlinks for ease in reference, and include an annual reporting requirement to the CEO through the COO for synopses of exit survey and interview data. The revised draft was shared with all offices, and comments from the reviews are being integrated into a final revision that will be circulated for the Chairman's signature. (Reference OIG Recommendations 1 and 3.)
2. Form 302, Employee Checkout Form has been updated to align with the revised PPM 834 and to provide clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of agency staff during and after employee separation clearance. (Reference OIG Recommendations 1 and 3.)
3. OAS successfully coordinated and piloted the electronic routing of the Form 302 using the Package Routing System (PRS). The electronic routing of the form will support agency staff with more expeditiously obtaining required signatures and effectively controlling routing and retention of the required documentation consistent with government records retention policies. (Reference OIG Recommendations 1, 3 and 4.)
4. The Records Management Program was transferred from OAS to the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and notice of the transfer was provided to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on March 19, 2020. OIT onboarded a new Records and Information Management Specialist on October 26, 2020. The Chairman signed Des-28, on November 17, 2020, designating the Director, Office of Information Technology as the Senior Agency Official for the Agency Records Program. OAS remains committed to supporting our colleagues in OIT as needed to ensure a seamless

functional transition. The OAS Deputy Director updated the issuing unit for Office Directive 007, Separating Employees Clearance Process to OIT and notified OIT staff on January 12, 2021. (Reference OIG Recommendations 2 and 4.)

5. As part of the OAS Deputy Director's reporting on the employee exit data in 2019, she coordinated with the Associate Director, Human Resources and Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion (EEOI) to ensure the questions met agency requirements and were consistent with established practices. The questions were most recently updated in 2019 to gather feedback on recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities. (Reference OIG Recommendations 5 and 6.)

In response to the recommendations and in consideration of the information above, OAS commits to:

1. Route revised PPM 834, Exit Procedures for the COO's and Chairman's signatures not later than January 31, 2021.
2. Purge all separating employee documentation, including exit surveys and checkout forms, to comply with the associated retention periods not later than February 19, 2021.
3. Using feedback from the offices, develop a reporting template and issue a report on agency exit data not later than March 31, 2021, and annually thereafter. Feedback will be solicited from appropriate office contacts using the OAS Exit Questionnaire Data Analysis completed on October 3, 2019.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the OIG's findings and recommendations for the employee exit process. As we hope you will note in this memorandum, OAS is committed to responsive and continual process improvement. Our organizational focus is ensuring we achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction while adhering to all required legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. We are particularly excited about the caliber of technical expertise and professionalism of our current team members and look forward to continuing to evolve our internal practices and procedures to model private and public sector best practices.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this audit was to determine whether FCA has an efficient and effective process for separating employees. We performed this audit remotely from May 2020 through February 2021. The scope of our audit was limited to employees that separated from the Agency from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019.

We performed the following steps to accomplish the audit objective:

- Identified and reviewed laws and regulations related to the audit objective;
- Identified and reviewed related policies, procedures, directives, and guidance;
- Reviewed access controls for the exit survey listing through verification of accesses with OIT personnel;
- Sampled employee separations based on data in the PAR listing.¹⁹ The scope was limited to separations from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019. Analyzed the PAR data set for the number of employees separating from the Agency, the number of separating employees by office, location, and series, and the number of separating employees by type of separation. Because the sample was judgmental, it cannot be projected to the entire population of Agency separations;
- Retrieved exit survey data from entries dated January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019. Reviewed the 21 responses that were within scope for 5 of the 25 questions on the survey. The sample was judgmental and cannot be projected to the population;
- Sampled 18 employee checkout forms. The sample was judgmental and based on date, office, and type of separation action. The sample was judgmental and cannot be projected to the population;
- Requested and received a compilation of one-on-one interviews conducted and reviewed questions asked by OAS personnel;
- Reviewed an OAS analysis performed in 2019 on exit survey data;
- Reviewed supporting documentation from Human Resources personnel; and
- Interviewed selected OAS personnel.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We assessed internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the objective. Because our review was limited, it would not necessarily have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of our audit. We also

¹⁹ All OIG employee information, checkouts, and surveys were not included in the audit.

assessed the reliability of data relevant to our audit objective and determined that the data was sufficiently reliable. We assessed the risk of fraud related to our audit objective while evaluating audit evidence. Overall, we believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

APPENDIX A: EXIT SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following are the questions asked in the exit survey questionnaire:

Background Information Concerning Your Departure From FCA

1. How many years have you worked at FCA?

- 1 year or less
- More than 1 but less than 2 years
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-34 years
- 35 or more years
- No answer

2. How many years (including military service) have you worked for the federal government?

- 1 year or less
- More than 1 but less than 2 years
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-34 years
- 35 or more years
- No answer

3. What will you be doing when you leave FCA? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Retiring
- Resigning (but not accepting another position)
- Transferring to a position in another federal agency
- Taking a position in a state or local government
- Taking a position in the private sector
- Taking a position in the not-for-profit sector

Enlisting in the military
Self-employed
Attending school
Other
Don't know

4. Would you like to return to FCA?

Definitely yes
Probably yes
Possibly yes
Uncertain
Possibly no
Probably no
Definitely no
No answer

Factors Influencing Your Decision to Leave Your Position at FCA

Work environment at FCA

5. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following work environment conditions was a reason for your decision to leave FCA. (Please check one in each row.)

5a. Nature of work you were doing

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5b. Light workload

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5c. Heavy workload

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5d. Lack of opportunities for career advancement

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5e. Level of administrative support (equipment, supplies, assistance, etc.)

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5f. Physical environment (space, temperature, furniture, noise level, etc.)

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5g. Co-workers

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5h. Immediate supervisor

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5i. Your team or unit's management

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5j. Changes occurring in FCA's philosophy and structure

Not a reason
Minor reason

Major reason
No answer

5k. Changes occurring in FCA's products and work processes

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

5l. Other work environment conditions

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

If you checked "Minor Reason" or "Major Reason" for "Other work environment conditions," please describe them below.

6. Overall, how much influence did these work environment conditions have on your decision to leave FCA?

Very great influence
Great influence
Moderate influence
Some influence
Little or no influence
No answer

Opportunities and benefits available at other organization(s)

7. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following opportunities and benefits available at other organization(s) was a reason for your decision to leave FCA. (Please check one in each row.)

7a. Higher salary

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7b. Better benefit package

Not a reason

Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7c. Opportunity to make better use of skills and abilities

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7d. Opportunity to work more independently

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7e. Less stress

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7f. More flexibility in hours

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7g. More flexibility in place of work

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7h. Different organizational philosophy and structure

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

7i. Different products and work processes

- Not a reason
- Minor reason
- Major reason
- No answer

7j. Different size (larger/smaller) organization

- Not a reason
- Minor reason
- Major reason
- No answer

7k. Other opportunities and benefits

- Not a reason
- Minor reason
- Major reason
- No answer

If you checked "Minor Reason" or "Major Reason" for "Other opportunities and benefits," please describe them below.

8. Overall, how much influence did opportunities and benefits available at other organization(s) have on your decision to leave FCA?

- Very great influence
- Great influence
- Moderate influence
- Some influence
- Little or no influence
- No answer

Personal factors

9. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following personal factors was a reason for your decision to leave FCA. (Please check one in each row.)

9a. Opportunity to take an "early out"

- Not a reason
- Minor reason
- Major reason
- No answer

9b. Plan to pursue further education

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9c. Personal interests (e.g., hobby, starting own business)

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9d. Family responsibilities (e.g., child care, elder care)

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9e. Personal health reasons

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9f. Family health reasons

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9g. Spouse or partner accepted position at another location

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9h. Want to be able to work at home

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9i. Want to be able to work closer to home

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

9j. Other personal factors

Not a reason
Minor reason
Major reason
No answer

If you checked "Minor Reason" or "Major Reason" for "Other personal factors", please describe them below.

10. Overall, how much influence did personal factors have on your decision to leave FCA?

Very great influence
Great influence
Moderate influence
Some influence
Little or no influence
No answer

Supervision and recognition

11. In your opinion, how much was your work at FCA supported and recognized by your immediate supervisor? By immediate supervisor we mean the one supervisor for whom you worked the most during the last 12 months.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Please check one in each row.)

11a. My immediate supervisor treated me fairly.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree

Strongly disagree
No answer

11b. My immediate supervisor gave me open and honest feedback about my job performance.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

11c. My immediate supervisor gave me the sense that my work was valued.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

11d. My immediate supervisor provided meaningful incentives for high performance.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

11e. If you have any additional comments about your immediate supervisor, please enter them below.

Supervision and recognition

12. In your opinion, how much was your work at FCA supported and recognized by your team or unit management? By team or unit management we mean the one team or unit management for whom you worked the most during the last 12 months.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Please check one in each row.)

12a. My team or unit management treated me fairly.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree

Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

12b. My team or unit management gave me open and honest feedback about my job performance.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

12c. My team or unit management gave me the sense that my work was valued.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

12d. My team or unit management provided meaningful incentives for high performance.

Strongly Agree
Generally Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Generally disagree
Strongly disagree
No answer

12e. If you have any additional comments about your team or unit management, please enter them below.

FCA as a Potential Employer

13. Would you recommend FCA to a family member, friend, or professional colleague as a place to work?

Definitely yes
Probably yes
Uncertain
Probably no

Definitely no
No answer

14. Which of the following are reasons you would recommend FCA as a good place to work?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

FCA's mission
Nature of work
Salary
Benefits
Job security
Workload
Opportunities for career advancement
Co-workers
FCA's philosophy and structure
FCA's products and work processes
Other reasons for recommending FCA
None of the above; I would not recommend FCA as a good place to work

If you checked "Other reasons for recommending FCA", please describe them below.

15. If you would not recommend FCA as a good place to work, which of the following are reasons why? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

FCA's mission
Nature of work
Salary
Benefits
Job security
Workload
Opportunities for career advancement
Co-workers
FCA's philosophy and structure
FCA's products and work processes
Other reasons for recommending FCA
None of the above; I would recommend FCA as a good place to work

Information About You

16. What is your position?

Grade 30-33
Grade 34-37
Grade 38-40

Grade 41-44
Board Member
No answer

17. Where are you located?

Bloomington
Dallas
Denver
McLean
Sacramento

18. What is your sex?

Male
Female
No answer

19. What is your race/ethnicity?

White
Black or African American
American Indian
Asian or Pacific Islander
Other

20. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic origin?

Yes
No
No answer

Final Parting Words

As you prepare to depart from FCA, we are interested in your opinions about FCA's products and services, about FCA's work processes and environment, or about any other aspect of FCA. Please use the questions below to give us your thoughts on these issues.

21. What are the strengths of FCA's current products and services (written reports, testimonies, analyses of bills, questions for hearings, response to requests for data)?

22. What are the weaknesses of FCA's current products and services (written reports, testimonies, analyses of bills, questions for hearings, response to requests for data)?

23. What changes to FCA's products and services would you suggest?

24. Is there anything you would like FCA management (at any level) to know about FCA's work processes, personnel policies, physical work environment, computer services, support services, or any other aspect of FCA?

25. How would you describe the agency's inclusiveness as it relates to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), individuals with disabilities, sexual orientation or religious preference?

APPENDIX B: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are the questions asked in the one-on-one interviews:

1. Did dissatisfaction with any of the following influence your decision to leave?
 - Working conditions (setting, schedule, travel, flexibility)
 - Pay
 - Supervisor
 - Location
 - Cost of living in area
 - Commute
2. Do you feel you had the necessary training to be successful in your role? If not, how could it have been better?
3. How would you describe employee morale?
4. Do you think the appropriate amount of communication between and senior management takes place?
5. Does the agency show interest and investment in its employees?
6. Were the administrative policies and procedures that in place helpful or can they be improved upon? If yes, please elaborate.
7. What is your opinion of your supervisor? Did he or she:
 - Give usable performance feedback?
 - Recognize accomplishments?
 - Treat you fairly and respectfully?
 - Resolve concerns promptly?
 - Keep you informed?
 - Support work life balance?
8. What were the positive aspects about your job, manager, and/or the organization that caused you to stay as long as you did?
9. What advice would you give your replacement?
10. What skills and qualifications do you think we need to look for in your replacement?
11. Did you witness any violations of laws or policies?
12. Do you have any objection to our sharing your comments with management?
13. Would you recommend the agency as a great place to work?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add?



Farm Credit Administration
Office of Inspector General

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, & MISMANAGEMENT:

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To learn more about reporting wrongdoing to the OIG, please visit our website at <https://www.fca.gov/about/inspector-general>.