

Minorities

MINORITY EMPLOYMENT SKILLS SURVEY,

Port of Oakland

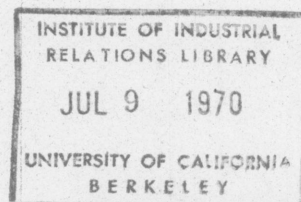
by

James M. Newman and Juan F. Lopez,
The Civil Service Department, City of Oakland;

and

The Institute for Local Self Government

Oakland Civil Service Department and
Institute for Local Self Government,
September, 1968.



Statement of the Problem

The Civil Service Department, City of Oakland, and the Institute for Local Self Government recently completed the Minority Employee Skills Survey, in the Oakland Port Authority. It was the first step in an attempt to determine the potential, as opposed to actual achievement, of minority group people working for the Port of Oakland. Some of the questions this study attempts to answer are as follows:

1. What percentage of the total number of minority employees in the Port have usable additional skills? What are those skills?
2. What can be done to encourage greater vertical occupational mobility for minorities within the framework of the Civil Service Department and the Port?
3. In what kinds of employment are minorities most frequently found? Why?
4. Do minority employees generally have more or less education than the specific job requires?
5. Do minority employees feel as though they have had, do have, and will have a fair opportunity to advance with the City of Oakland and/or the Port?

Methodology

A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire was used by the interviewers in a face-to-face situation. Sixty one minority employees of the Port were contacted and interviewed. One employee was not interviewed because of extended sick leave and therefore was not included in this study. The interviewees were encouraged to talk freely without fears of retribution or reprisals. Information the interviewees desired to be held confidential was so held. Minority employees at different employment levels were interviewed in order to obtain a varied perspective. For the purposes of this study a minority group member was defined as one who considers himself to be a Negro, Mexican-American, Chinese-American, or Japanese-American.

Findings

1. The percentage of the total number of minority employees included in the study having usable additional skills or training was found to be 23%. The percentage of minority employees having exceptional potential was found to be 11%. (Exceptional potential was defined as displaying high capabilities for vertical occupational mobility as determined by the interviewer who questioned the employee concerning interests, ambitions, and special abilities or aptitudes). A listing of the individuals and kinds of usable additional skills and training is found on pages 4 and 5.

Following that is a listing of those determined to have exceptional potential (page 6). The high percentages indicate that maximum benefits would be realized from programs directed at providing an opportunity for motivated and talented persons to advance from low skill entry jobs to any position available in the Port through both re-designed training and educational opportunities.

In comparing the lists of those with additional skills, training, and potential to the Position File (see Appendix I) it is apparent that the Port could meet some of its manpower needs through presently employed minority workers. For example, the File discloses a need for five electricians while the Port has three minority employees who have training and/or experience with electricity. The File also discloses a need for Junior Engineers. The Port presently has employed two minority persons with two or more years of engineering course work. With encouragement from the Port, these individuals could complete their education and move into the position of Junior Engineer. Other examples, similar to those cited, are to be found.

2. When considering methods to increase greater vertical occupational mobility for minorities within the framework of the Civil Service Department the humanizing concept stands out. When minority employees have contact with the Civil Service Department it is usually occasioned by the taking of a test. As the situation exists there is no follow-up with the employees who have failed, describing the reasons for failing. Perhaps pre-test or post-test counseling by the Civil Service Department for all employees would be in order. If such a service were provided, minority employees would benefit most.

* A Listing of Individuals and Kinds of

Usable Additional Skills or Training

Port of Oakland

(Names of interviewees and department supervisors
included in original report only.)

	Name Job Title Department Supervisor	Usable Additional Skills or Training	Age	Present Salary
1.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Journeyman level carpentry and pipe laying.	43	743
2.	Truck Driver	Income Tax reporting.	44	797
3.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Plastering and automotive repair school.	43	743
4.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Certified SCUBA diver; sub-professional (surveyor) engineering training while in Army.	42	743
5.	Janitor	One year of body and fender program.	34	543
6.	Serviceman	Electrician school; instructor for one year in ground power units while in Navy.	31	753
7.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Welder	41	628
8.	Heavy Equipment Operator	College courses in Business Administration; supervisory experience	37	956
9.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	SCUBA diver; one year of college	26	743

* Employees over age 45 are not listed.

10.	Janitor-Airport	Two years of radio, television and electronics program.	38	544
11.	Janitor-Airport	One year of college; two years of radio school (part-time) while in the Marines.	40	553
12.	Janitor-Airport	One year of automotive-mechanical training.	27	553
13.	Janitor	Electronics and hydraulics school (2½ years).	45	553
14.	Janitor-Airport	Two years of machine shop school (part-time).	32	585

Employees Without B.A. or B.S.But With Exceptional Potential ^{1/}Port of Oakland(Names of interviewees and department supervisors
included in original report only.)

	Name Job Title Department Supervisor	Attribute Determining Potential	Age	Present Salary
1.	Junior Accountant Auditor	Lacks 3 units before obtaining B.A. degree.	33	753
2.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Certificate in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning.	27	743
3.	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Lacks 12 units of an A.A. degree in Supervision.	27	664
4.	Sr. Engineering Aide	Lacks 1 year of college before obtaining a B.S. in Civil Engineering.	31	733
5.	Data Processor Punch Op.	Hopes to become self-employed and establish a key-punch service.	25	519
6.	Engineering Aide	Lacks 2 years of college before obtaining a B.S. in Civil Engineering.	29	683
7.	Serviceman	Has been in business for himself; scientific interest.	37	867

^{1/} Full professional employees (those with a minimum of a B.S. or B.A. degree) were not included in this listing.

Incentive programs to train the low-skilled workers would increase vertical mobility. On-the-job teaching as well as on-the-job training concepts could be expanded upon in the Port. For example, accredited courses could be offered in the Port and be taught by employees presently working for the Port. Arrangements for on-site classes and on-site exams could be made. Work-study programs, involving part-time work and part-time attendance, could be developed at the local junior colleges. Also, mobility could be increased by offering educational leaves of absence with pay (with no loss of seniority), to be considered a loan, repayable through working with the Port. For example, for every year employed with the Port 10% of the original loan would be forgiven until the maximum of 100% was reached. Such loans have precedent in the field of teaching.

Greater vertical occupational mobility would occur with an increase in available entry level openings. Openings could be increased by the restructuring of presently vacant professional and technical positions allowing for meaningful entry level positions.

Hiring practices and standards should also be re-examined periodically. Minimum qualifications, particularly for hard-to-fill jobs, should be examined in terms of their validity and relationship to the actual skills and knowledge required to perform a job. Finally, records should be kept on those applicants not accepted in order to analyze how and why they failed to meet requirements.

3. Seventy seven percent (47) of the minority employees of the Port of Oakland were employed in the capacities of Semi-Skilled Laborer, Janitor or Truck Driver. All but one of the minority employees comprising this 77% were Negro. Two of the minority individuals (slightly over 3%) were employed on a professional level. There were three minority individuals employed in sub-professional positions. These individuals were Oriental (Table I).

The research disclosed an absence of minority employees (including no Negroes) at the professional level in the Port of Oakland. In part, this is the result of an unequal distribution of educational opportunities for the minority population generally. It is also the result of a lack of information regarding openings and/or of hiring practices placing the minority people at a competitive disadvantage. The lack of information concerning openings occurs when the professionals (who are the first to be aware of openings) inform friends and other professionals of such openings. Sometimes vacancies are filled before opening announcements are distributed. "Although civil service exams and procedures may be publicly announced, it takes 'being in the know' to keep posted and 'inside information' to know when actual openings occur."^{1/} Also, it is felt that "traditionally, American workers have obtained employment mainly through personal contact" in both the public and private sector.^{2/} Since social and occupational integration has been the exception and not the rule, the minority people have had the fewest influential contacts

^{1/} Judith G. Benjamin, "Civil Service and the Poor: Some New Developments", New Careers Development Center, New York University, Sept., 1967, p.2.
^{2/} National Committee on Employment of Youth, Getting Hired, Getting Trained, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, GPO, 1965, p.30.

Title	Minority Group				Total
	Negro	Mexican-American	Chinese-American	Japanese-American	
Senior Engineer			1		1
Assistant Engineer			1		1
Sr.Engineer Aide				1	1
Engineering Aide				1	1
Jr.Acct.Auditor			1		1
Steno-Clerk (Int.)	2f		1f		3
Data Processor	1f				1
Chief Airport Jan.	1				1
Janitor Foreman	2				2
Airport Janitor	16				16
Port Janitor	2				2
Janitress	2f				2
Serviceman	3				3
Semi-Skilled Lab.	20	1			21
Truck Driver	3				3
Power Equip. Op.	1				1
Maintenance Learner		1			1
Total	53	2	4	2	61

(f = female)

Type of Employment and

Minority Group

Port of Oakland.

1968

Table I.

and therefore the fewest opportunities to be hired.

A concomitant factor accounting for a scarcity of minority people holding professional positions in the Port would be that of increased competition among professional groups for minority personnel. A vigorous recruitment policy similar to that of private industry would eradicate this factor.

4. In examining the type of employment of minority individuals in relation to level of education achieved, the researcher examined the job specifications from the City of Oakland. In reading the description and examples of work for the job of Janitor, it was found that the education and experience requirements are "one year of recent full-time paid experience in commercial or industrial building cleaning work". No specific level of formal education is required. In examining the level of education achieved by the Janitors in the Port of Oakland it was found that 57% (12) have a high school diploma and/or above (Table II).

A similar situation regarding the employment of Janitors was found in the employment of Semi-Skilled Laborers. The education and experience requirements for a Semi-Skilled Laborer reads:

Graduation from high school and at least one year of recent, heavy, manual labor experience; or completion of the eighth grade and five years of recent, heavy, manual labor experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

It was found that 48% (10) of the Semi-Skilled Laborers had a minimum of high school diplomas with 33% (7) of the total interviewed having 1-60 semester units of junior college or college work.

Title	Achievement															Total
	8th and below	9th	10th	11th	12th	High school diploma	1-15 College Semester Units	16-30	31-45	46-60	61-90	91 and above	B.A. or B.S. Degree	1-50 Units of Graduate Work	Master's Degree	
Senior Engineer															1	1
Assistant Engineer													1			1
Sr. Engineering Aide												1				1
Engineering Aide											1					1
Jr.Accountant Aud.												1				1
Steno-Clerk (Int.)						1		1		1						3
Data Processor						1										1
Chief Airport Janitor				1												1
Janitor Foreman						1			1							2
Airport Janitor	1	2	3	1		4		2	1	2						16
Port Janitor				1		1										2
Janitress				1				1								2
Serviceman				1			1	1								3
Semi-Skilled Laborer	6	2	1	1	1	3	2	2		3						21
Truck Driver					1	2										3
Maintenance Learner				1												1
Power Equipment Operator										1						1
Total	7	4	4	7	2	13	3	7	2	8	1	1	1		1	61

Occupational Title and Educational Achievement

Port of Oakland

1968

Table II

It seems that the level of educational achievement is high in relation to the type of employment in which minority individuals are found. How significant this finding is would have to be qualified by a similar study of non-minority employees of the Port. It can be concluded however, that the minority employees of the Port are generally of a high quality in educational achievement. Such high caliber employees would derive maximum benefits from incentive programs such as tuition reimbursement, released time for post-entry training, incentive pay bonuses and other inducements.

5. In analyzing the realities of occupational opportunities there are two prime considerations to be examined. First, what percentage of minority employees have actually advanced and second, do the minority employees generally feel that they have had, do have, and will have, the opportunity to advance. In considering the first of these it was found that 33% (20) of the total interviewed have experienced an occupational movement that they consider to be an advancement. The majority of these have been from the job designation of Street Sweeper to that of Janitor or Semi-Skilled Laborer (Table III). (Vertical mobility was summed up by one interviewee thusly: "Going from Semi-Skilled Laborer to Truck Driver doesn't look like much to an outsider but in the Port it's like going from pageboy to senator".) Few of the minority employees interviewed reported feeling a lack of opportunity resulting from discrimination but rather felt a lack of opportunity resulting from the scarcity of job openings.

Advanced
from:

Advanced to:

Recreation Attendant
Street Sweeper
Janitor
Semi-Skilled Laborer
Engineering Aide
Weed Abator
Truck Driver
Blacksmith Helper
Junior Engineer

	Serviceman	Chief Airport Janitor	Janitor Foreman	Airport Janitor	Senior Engineering Aid	Power Equipment Operator	Semi-Skilled Laborer	Truck Driver	Assistant Engineer	Total
Recreation Attendant				1						1
Street Sweeper							6	1		7
Janitor	1	1	1				1			4
Semi-Skilled Laborer								2		2
Engineering Aide					1					1
Weed Abator							2			2
Truck Driver						1				1
Blacksmith Helper							1			1
Junior Engineer									1	1
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	3	1	20

Types of Occupational Mobility (Vertical)

Experienced by Minority Employees

Port of Oakland

1968

Table III

Conclusions

This study has disclosed that there are no Negroes or Mexican-Americans holding professional positions within the Port of Oakland. However, 20% (54) of the employees working for the Port are Negro. The significance of such data is heightened by the fact that at the present time more than 30% of the residents of the City of Oakland are Negro. The data becomes alarming when considering population projections for the future. Studies indicate that if present trends continue (with continual in-migration of Negroes and out-migration of whites) the Negro population of Oakland by the year 1985 (projected population 546,000) will be 64%.^{1/} Two questions the study raises are (1) how to bring more minority people (especially Negroes) into the Port and (2) how to increase vertical mobility of non-professional employees presently working for the Port. In order to answer these questions the following recommendations are suggested for study and consideration:

1. Increase available entry level openings through the redesigning of jobs. This can be done by ascertaining the manpower needs, by examining and noting the kind and number of positions created, budgeted, and filled (Appendix I). For certain hard-to-fill and high turnover positions a careful analysis comparing the actual jobs performed to the skills required should be made to insure that existing job qualifications are realistic in light of persistent recruitment problems.

^{1/} Stanford Research Institute, 701 Project, City of Oakland, 1968.

2. Initiate targeted recruitment, utilizing the population in the area served and provide for preferential certification of eligibles residing in the area. 1/
3. Implement an active, vigorous recruitment similar to that of private industry. High priority positions for more active recruitment would be those of Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer.
4. Eliminate unnecessary minimum requirements of formal education and/or experience.
5. Implement a work-study program permitting attendance at an educational institution.
6. Establish educational leaves of absence with pay. This would be considered a loan repayable through working with the Port.
7. Plan for on-the-job teaching as well as on-the-job training for present employees.
8. Accumulate data on applicants not accepted in order to follow-up and determine how and why they failed to meet requirements. This would allow innovation in personnel practices based on analysis and evaluation.
9. Begin pre-test and/or post-test counseling by the Civil Service Department for all employees.
10. Structure tests on general potential and performance not on academic achievement.

1/ See Albert H. Aronson (Director of State Merit Systems, Department of Health, Education and Welfare) "Capacity, Credentials, and Careers", Institute for Local Self Government, Berkeley, March 1963, p. 14.

11. Pay entry level salaries that are above poverty criteria.
12. Eliminate an arrest record as a disqualification and substitute a conviction record.

With the implementation of the preceding recommendations, a more fluid system of occupational ascent could become a reality.

Appendix I

PORT OF OAKLAND POSITION FILE

July 31, 1968

Occupational title ¹	Entry Salary	C ²	B ³	F ⁴
Administrative Secretary	655	1	1	1
Airport Clerk	655	1	1	1
*Airport Manager	1544	1	1	1
Airport Serviceman	693	35	35	29
Airport Telephone and Teletype Operator	488	9	9	4
*Airport Traffic Representative	1085	1	1	1
Assistant Airport Manager	1247	1	1	0
Assistant Chief Engineer	1650	1	1	1
Assistant Engineer	904	13	13	5
*Assistant Executive Director	1750	1	1	1
Assistant Manager, Properties Department	1131	1	1	1
Assistant Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	904	3	3	1
*Assistant Port Attorney	2000	1	1	0
Assistant Terminal Superintendent	786	1	1	0
*Assistant Traffic Manager	867	1	1	0
Associate Engineer	1070	3	3	0

* Asterisk designates the position is exempt from City of Oakland Personnel Department selection procedures.

1. Temporary and/or part-time positions were not included.
- 2.C Indicates the number of positions created.
- 3.B Indicates the number of positions budgeted.
- 4.F Indicates the number of positions filled.

	Entry Salary	C	B	F
Associate Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	1070	1	1	1
Automotive Equipment Mechanic	693	6	6	2
Automotive Serviceman	577	5	5	2
Blacksmith-Welder	797	1	1	1
Building Maintenance Engineer	743	7	7	7
Carpenter	743	10	10	3
Chief Airport Janitor	646	1	1	1
Chief Airport Serviceman	753	10	10	9
Chief Building Maintenance Engineer	956	1	1	1
Chief of Field Party	904	2	2	2
Data Process Punch Operator	488	1	1	1
Deputy Port Attorney I	900	1	1	1
Deputy Port Attorney II	1400	1	1	1
*Director of Aviation	1695	1	1	1
*Director of Fiscal Affairs	1590	1	1	1
*Director of Maritime Activities	1695	1	1	0
Dock Office Clerk	683	5	5	0
Duplicating Equipment Operator	523	1	1	1
Electrical and Mechanical Engineer	1415	1	1	0
Electrician	831	11	11	6
Electronic Computer Console Operator	553	1	1	1
Electronic Computer Programmer I	655	1	1	0
Engineering Aide	610	8	8	6
*Executive Director and Chief Engineer	2500	1	1	1

	Entry Salary	C	B	F
Heavy Equipment Mechanic	855	3	3	1
Intermediate Accountant Clerk	516	6	6	6
Intermediate Clerk	495	9	9	3
Intermediate Stenographer Clerk	495	13	12	10
Intermediate Typist Clerk	461	13	13	4
Janitor	495	3	3	3
Janitor Airport	495	21	17	19
Janitor Foreman	495	3	3	3
Janitress	495	2	2	2
Junior Accountant Auditor	673	2	2	2
Junior Engineer	808	8	8	1
Junior Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	808	1	1	0
*Legal Stenographer	569	3	3	3
Maintenance Learner	350	10	10	3
*Manager Properties Department	1695	1	1	1
Painter	733	10	10	7
Plumber	879	4	4	2
Port Construction Inspector	808	4	4	1
Port Equipment Maintenance Foreman	904	1	1	1
*Port Field Representative	970	1	1	1
Port Maintenance and Construction Supervisor	970	2	2	2
Port Maintenance Foreman	843	5	5	3
Port Messenger and Clerk	516	1	1	1
Port Operations Clerk	673	2	2	2
Port Properties Representative	673	1	1	1

	Entry Salary	C	B	F
Port Publicity Assistant	593	2	2	0
Port Purchasing Agent	891	1	1	1
Port Supervising Engineer	1415	3	3	1
Port Traffic and Tariff Clerk	723	1	1	1
*Port Traffic Representative	879	3	3	1
Power Equipment Operator	855	4	4	4
Properties Technician	904	1	1	1
Records Assistant	523	2	1	1
Records Supervisor	610	1	1	1
*Relief Airport Serviceman	523	2	1	1
*Relief Reservation Clerk	266	4	3	1
Reservation Clerk	461	10	10	9
*Secretary of the Board	1216	1	1	1
Secretary-Stenographer	569	5	5	3
*Secretary to the Executive Director	754	1	1	1
*Secretary to the Port Attorney and Supervising Legal Secretary	808	1	1	1
Semi-Skilled Laborer	664	55	55	38
Senior Accountant Auditor	984	1	1	0
Supervising Accountant Auditor	1131	1	1	1
Senior Engineering Aide	693	2	2	1
Senior Mechanical and Electrical Engineer	1247	1	1	1
Telephone Operator and Clerk	461	2	2	1
*Terminal Superintendent and Traffic Representative	808	1	1	0
*Traffic Manager and Manager, Marine Terminal Department	1415	1	1	0

	Entry Salary	C	B	F
Truck Driver and Laborer	713	8	8	6
Utilities Foreman	930	2	2	2
Weed Workman	215	12	12	9
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	TOTALS:	410	410	264

Appendix II

Appendix III

