ARMY MARKETING

The Army Has Taken Recent Actions That Could Improve Program Oversight, Effectiveness, and Workforce Practices

What GAO Found

The Army has recently taken steps to improve the oversight of its primary marketing and advertising contract and measurement of the effectiveness of its marketing and advertising program in response to two U.S. Army Audit Agency (AAA) reports. In April 2018, AAA found that the Army Marketing and Research Group (AMRG)—the component responsible for conducting the Army’s national-level marketing and advertising program—did not fully evaluate the performance of its contracted advertising agency or track the effectiveness of its marketing and advertising efforts. GAO found that AMRG has taken or is taking actions to address AAA’s recommendations:

- **Contract Oversight.** AMRG has developed processes for overseeing the advertising agency’s performance and services. For example, AMRG developed a form program managers use to validate that proposed advertising services are not already provided through other contracts.

- **Program Effectiveness.** AMRG has taken steps in several areas related to revising its strategic marketing goals to support Army recruiting, updating how it assesses marketing and advertising effectiveness, and improving the reliability of data systems. AMRG’s steps are consistent with commercial best practices that GAO identified for assessing the effectiveness of advertising, such as identifying outcomes from advertising.

Examples of Army Marketing and Advertising Activities, Including Promotional Items, Website, and Mobile Assets

View GAO-20-93. For more information, contact Elizabeth Field at (202) 512-2775 or fie1de1@gao.gov.

The Army has also taken steps to improve the workforce practices and organizational structure of its marketing and advertising program in response to two workforce reviews. The two reviews—by an Army organization and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)—found that AMRG, among other things, did not have regular communication throughout its workforce and with its stakeholders, and had a poor workforce climate. AMRG took initial steps to address the reviews’ recommendations. The Army then established a new office effective August 2019—the Office of the Chief Army Enterprise Marketing—to replace AMRG and to assume all marketing and advertising activities. Some of the Army’s early steps to establish the new office are consistent with key practices for agency reform efforts identified previously by GAO. For example, the Army outlined a three-phased plan with specific tasks and associated dates to fully establish the new office by early 2020 consistent with the key practice to establish implementation goals and a timeline.

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