



**New Report: Amtrak has opportunities to improve recruiting, retention of skilled engineers to help manage IIJA-funded infrastructure projects**

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WASHINGTON – Amtrak has opportunities to improve recruiting and retention of skilled engineers—who may manage infrastructure projects funded by the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act—and better keep pace and compete with the external labor market, a report from Amtrak’s Office of Inspector General released today found.

According to the report, Amtrak recognizes the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining skilled engineering managers in a tight labor market to help accomplish its strategic goals. Amtrak’s Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction Services group—formerly Engineering—will play a lead role supporting Amtrak’s objectives to build, repair, and restore infrastructure. In April 2022, the Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction Services group had 192 engineering managers, many with unique skill sets such as maintaining overhead catenary systems that supply electrical power to trains and building bridges and tunnels. The company plans to hire an additional 63 engineering managers in the Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction Services group by the end of fiscal year 2022 to restore basic operations and carry out the company’s rehabilitation and revitalization plan.

Amtrak has taken steps to address long-standing compensation challenges by adjusting the salaries of 393 managers across the company (including 14 engineering managers), benchmarking management compensation with market rates, increasing salaries for field engineers, offering them better work-life balance, and offering one-time signing bonuses for agreement employees who move into management positions, the report said.

The OIG found, however, that despite having guidance for monitoring pay gaps between managers and subordinates and regularly conducting market compensation reviews, the company has fallen behind on doing them because its guidance is informal and not communicated to newer managers. The company recently commissioned a compensation analysis that will benchmark its salaries and determine appropriate rates for management positions company-wide. The analysis, scheduled to be completed this summer, is the first such review since 2014. According to the report, formalizing compensation policies would help the company keep up with these reviews, avoid falling behind the market again, and reduce the challenges in recruiting and retaining the top talent needed to build an engineering workforce for the future.

Additionally, the OIG found that the company could analyze workforce data to help its Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction Services group assess the effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts. For example, analyzing and monitoring trends in employee turnover or intra-company personnel movements would help the group make timely adjustments to recruitment and retention initiatives and avoid prolonged vacancies and continued turnover in engineering management positions.

The OIG made three recommendations to minimize future challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled engineering managers. Amtrak management agreed with the recommendations and has plans to address them. More information is included in the full report which can be downloaded on the OIG's website: <https://direc.to/iegf>.

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