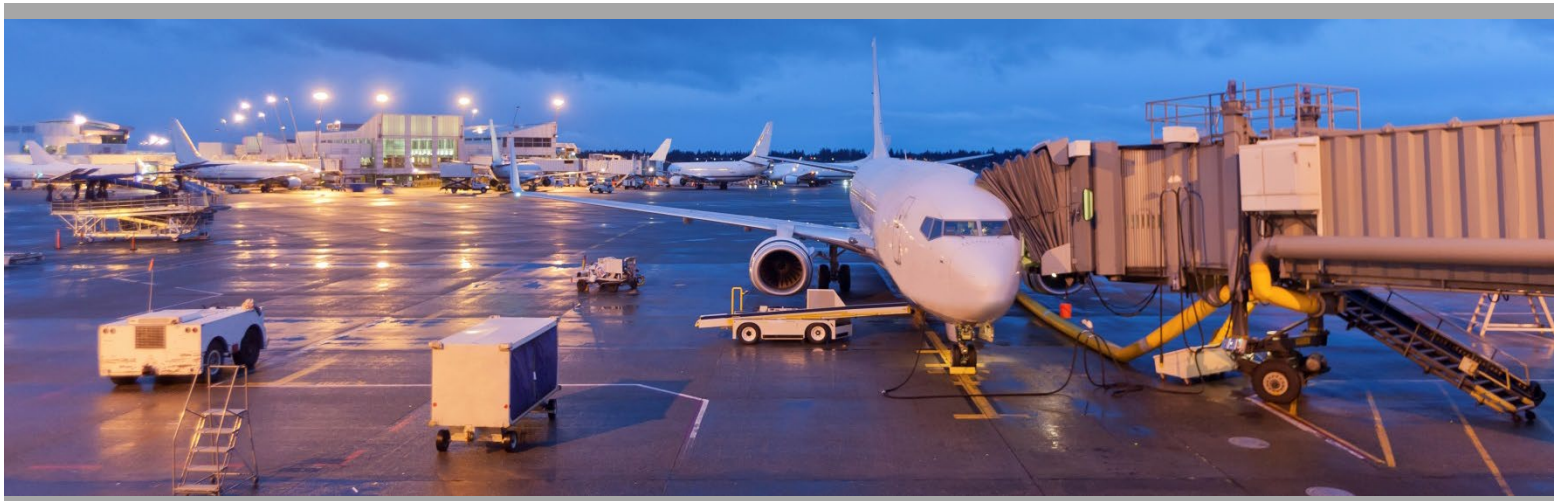




PARAS

PROGRAM FOR APPLIED
RESEARCH IN AIRPORT SECURITY



PARAS 0058

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Workforce Planning and Development for Airport Operator Security Roles

National Safe Skies Alliance, Inc.

Sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration

Julie Quinn, MPP
Katherine Williams, MPP
QuinnWilliams, LLC
Los Angeles, CA

Michele Freadman, CPP
M. Freadman Consulting
Attleboro, MA

Sybil Murphy, CCP, CBP, SHRM-CP
Dandridge, TN

Kevin Murphy
Dandridge, TN

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PARAS PROGRAM OFFICER

Jessica Grizzle *Safe Skies PARAS Program Manager*

PARAS 0058 PROJECT PANEL

Frank Capello *Broward County Aviation Department (Retired)*

Scott Creager *NW Natural*

John Rota *Massachusetts State Police*

Sarah Demory *City of Phoenix*

Bob Wheeler *Covenant Security*

Jason Sankey *Philadelphia International Airport*

Ethan Barske *Portland International Airport*

Clint Welch *San Diego County Regional Airport Authority*

Joan Stasiowski *Allegheny County Airport Authority*

Will Brown *ACTS – Aviation Security Inc.*

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	viii
PARAS ACRONYMS	ix
ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, INITIALISMS, AND SYMBOLS	x
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	11
SECTION 2: UNDERSTANDING SECURITY-RELATED DUTIES AND PRIORITIES	12
2.1 Regulatory Considerations	12
2.2 Governance Structure and its Impact	15
2.3 Third-Party Security Contractors	15
SECTION 3: AIRPORT STAFF VS. THIRD-PARTY SECURITY	17
3.1 Division of Duties Between Airport Staff and Contractors	17
3.2 Complexities Associated with Third-Party Security	17
3.3 Option of Using Multiple Security Contractors	18
SECTION 4: SECURITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS	20
4.1 Cat X Airport, County Operated	21
4.2 Cat I Airport, Port Authority Operated	23
4.3 Cat X Airport, City Operated	24
4.4 Cat I, Airport Authority	25
SECTION 5: UNIQUE POSITIONS AND FUNCTIONS TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCIES	27
5.1 Access Control and Construction Security Specialist	27
5.2 Airport Duty Manager	27
5.3 Crime Data Analyst	27
5.4 IT Business Analyst	28
5.5 Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team	28
SECTION 6: RECLASSIFICATION OF CREDENTIALING PERSONNEL	29
6.1 Rationale and Motivations for Reclassifying Credentialing Personnel	29
6.2 Overview of the Reclassification Process	30
SECTION 7: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECURITY AND HR	32
7.1 Aligning Expectations Between Security and HR	32
7.2 Collaboration During the Recruiting and Hiring Process	33
SECTION 8: PREFERRED CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS	34
8.1 Education Requirements and Relevance	34
8.2 Importance of Soft Skills	34
8.3 Mandatory Training and Required Certifications	36
SECTION 9: COMPENSATION CONSIDERATIONS	37
9.1 Compensation Study	37
9.2 Importance of Detailed Job Descriptions	37
9.3 Other Factors Candidates Consider	38

SECTION 10: RECRUITING STRATEGIES	39
10.1 Partnerships with Colleges and Universities	39
10.2 Aviation Industry Job Boards	39
10.3 Non-Aviation-Specific Job Boards	39
10.4 Airport Internships	40
10.5 Veteran and LEO Organizations	40
SECTION 11: HIRING PROCESS	41
11.1 Most Common Challenges	41
11.2 HR Best Practices	42
SECTION 12: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION	43
12.1 What Matters Most to Employees?	43
12.1.1 Company Values and Mission	43
12.1.2 “People First” Team Leader	43
12.1.3 Career Development	43
12.1.4 Mentoring	44
12.1.5 Open Communications	44
12.2 Why do Employees Leave a Positive Workplace?	44
SECTION 13: METRICS AND JUSTIFICATION STRATEGIES	45
13.1 Why Metrics are Important	45
13.2 Most Common Metrics	45
13.3 Challenges with Establishing Metrics and Collecting Data	46
13.4 Examples of Successful Metrics and Data Collection	46
SECTION 14: STRATEGIC PLANNING	47
14.1 Importance of Strategic Planning	47
14.2 Strategic Planning Opportunities	47
14.3 Need for Future Research	47
APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS	A-1
APPENDIX B: RECRUITING STRATEGY CHECKLIST	B-1
APPENDIX C: SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENTS	C-1
APPENDIX D: BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	D-1

SUMMARY

This guidance document serves as a comprehensive resource to assist airports in developing and optimizing their workforce strategies for security-related positions. It includes strategies, practices, and considerations for the following:

- Organizational structure and authorities
- Understanding security-related duties and priorities
- Positions and functions to maximize efficiencies
- Competencies and skills
- Airport operator employees vs. third-party contract staff
- Training and certification opportunities
- Compensation structures
- Recruiting strategies
- Challenges during the hiring process
- Employee development, engagement, and retention
- Strategic planning for future needs
- Metrics and justification strategies

PARAS ACRONYMS

ACRP	Airport Cooperative Research Program
AIP	Airport Improvement Program
AOA	Air Operations Area
ARFF	Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOT	Department of Transportation
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FSD	Federal Security Director
GPS	Global Positioning System
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IT	Information Technology
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
RFP	Request for Proposals
ROI	Return on Investment
SIDA	Security Identification Display Area
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSI	Sensitive Security Information
TSA	Transportation Security Administration

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, INITIALISMS, AND SYMBOLS

AAAE	American Association of Airport Executives
ASC	Airport Security Coordinator
ASP	Airport Security Program
CHRC	Criminal History Records Check
HR	Human Resources
IDMS	Identity Management System
LEO	Law Enforcement Officer
LOI	Letter of Investigation
MAP	Modern Apprentice Program
NA	National Amendment
PIL	Prohibited Items List
SD	Security Directive
STA	Security Threat Assessment

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Establishing and maintaining a secure and mission-focused airport environment requires the airport operator to plan, design, and develop strategies that support a proficient and well aligned workforce responsible for performing security roles. Security functions are often divided between a wide variety of stakeholders, including airport security employees, third-party security contractors, and law enforcement officers. Ensuring that roles are appropriately defined, compensation is reflective of responsibilities, and employees have the knowledge, tools, and support needed to effectively perform their duties requires coordination, collaboration, and support between security, airport operations, human resources (HR), and other units.

The primary goal of this guidance document is to provide airport operators with a compilation of existing guidance and resources that airports of all sizes can use when considering workforce strategies for security-related positions. Throughout the document, the experiences and levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of airports with specific strategies will be included.

This guidebook has been organized into 14 sections that are grouped under three topics:

- Understanding Security Organizations Structures, Roles, and Responsibilities
 - Section 2: Understanding Security-Related Duties and Priorities
 - Section 3: Airport Staff vs. Third-Party Security
 - Section 4: Security Organizational Structure Analysis
 - Section 5: Unique Positions and Functions to Maximize Efficiencies
 - Section 6: Reclassification of Credentialing Personnel
- Finding and Retaining the Right People
 - Section 7: Relationship Between Security and HR
 - Section 8: Preferred Candidate Competencies and Skills
 - Section 9: Compensation Considerations
 - Section 10: Recruiting Strategies
 - Section 11: Hiring Process
 - Section 12: Employee Engagement and Retention
- Assessing Success
 - Section 13: Metrics and Justification Strategies
 - Section 14: Strategic Planning

Following the narrative are multiple appendices that contain valuable resources and templates to assist airport personnel during the recruiting and hiring process. These resources include example job descriptions, a recruiting strategy checklist, and behavioral questions and situational assessments to use during candidate interviews and screening.

Note that some information is included in multiple sections. This redundancy is intentional to ensure the information is available to the readers who only review certain sections of the report.

SECTION 2: UNDERSTANDING SECURITY-RELATED DUTIES AND PRIORITIES

Airport security assignments are performed by different roles and entities, as a variety of stakeholders work together to ensure the best possible security stance to protect the airport community, passengers, and the air transportation system.

TSA and airlines carry out their designated security roles and responsibilities, such as ensuring passengers and cargo are properly screened before entering the aircraft, and ensuring the aircraft, catering supplies, and provisions are inspected for prohibited items and threats. While those security functions are vital to the overall aviation security ecosystem, this guidance will focus on the security of the airport itself, and the airport operator's workforce planning and development strategies to staff security related-positions and roles throughout the airport. This section will discuss:

- Regulatory considerations affecting security workforce planning and design
- Governance structure and impact on security organization framework, roles and responsibilities, and compensation
- Benefits and challenges associated with using third-party security contractors

2.1 Regulatory Considerations

TSA mandates security measures for airports through various regulations, including 49 CFR § 1542 – Airport Security, which requires compliance with the TSA-approved Airport Security Program (ASP) to operate the airport, and associated TSA National Security Amendments (NA) and TSA Security Directives (SD) applicable to US airports. Applicability includes the airport operators regulated under 49 CFR Part 1542.

TSA issues SDs to address specific security threats or vulnerabilities in the aviation sector. They are often a response to emerging threats, vulnerabilities, or intelligence. Directives may require changes or enhancements to security measures, procedures, or protocols for airports, air carriers, and other regulated entities within the aviation sector. NAs are changes or updates to existing regulations or security requirements that apply across the aviation sector. NAs can address broader security needs and may reflect changes in policy, technology, or operational practices. NAs require regulated entities to amend their ASP to address the new security requirements. As with SDs, NAs are mandatory for affected entities and may require immediate implementation.

The airport operator is also required to comply with 49 CFR § 1540 – Civil Aviation Security (including § 1540.105), which includes additional security program requirements, and security responsibilities for airports, airport personnel, and other individuals as defined in Subpart B—Responsibilities of Passengers and Other Individuals and Persons.

This provision outlines additional responsibilities that can be enforced by TSA and the airport, and need to be considered as part of the airport's overall security workforce staffing structure and duties. Highlights include: 1) compromising or attempting to circumvent any security system, measure, or procedure governed by the ASP and TSA regulations; 2) accessing a Secured Area, AOA, SIDA, or Sterile Area without complying with the systems, measures, or procedures implemented to control access, presence or movement in such areas; and 3) using, or allowing to be used, any airport-issued or airport-approved access or identification medium that authorizes the access, presence, or movement of

persons or vehicles in Secured Areas, AOA, or SIDAs in any other manner than that for which it was issued.

49 CFR § 1542 and the ASP establish security requirements for airport operators and outline measures designed to ensure the safety and security of the aviation system. Key components include:

- **Airport Security Programs:** Airports must develop and implement a TSA-approved ASP detailing security measures and procedures to comply with specific security requirements. Dedicated personnel are needed to perform these security measures and requirements to ensure compliance and prevent and mitigate findings, security vulnerabilities, liability, and other security risks.

The airport operator needs to understand the ASP and its commitments to determine the necessary workforce complement to support the security measures described in the ASP and associated regulatory requirements.

- **Personnel Vetting and Credentialing:** Airports must adhere to strict requirements for security threat assessments (STA) and airport-issued ID media that are outlined in their ASP and based on federal security requirements in 49 CFR § 1542 and other applicable regulations. Airport workers requiring unescorted access authority to secure areas must undergo a background check consisting of a fingerprint-based Criminal History Records Check (CHRC) and a TSA STA, in addition to other background check requirements.
- **Aviation Worker Screening:** Applicable airports must conduct random physical screening of all aviation employees entering Sterile or Secured Areas from a public area within a passenger terminal building.
- **Access Control:** Regulations require stringent measures to prevent and detect unauthorized entry into, presence in, and movement within regulated areas (i.e., Secured Area, SIDA, AOA, and Sterile Area), and to control entry to these areas as identified in the airport's ASP. The ASP measures to control access to regulated areas require a combination of resources, including personnel, physical security and technology. However, the workforce considerations for security-related roles are critical to effectively assess staffing needs and deployment.

Personnel (direct or contract) responsible for operating and maintaining physical security and technology solutions also need to be considered in the overall needs assessment. There are a multitude of essential physical security structures and systems that require personnel to remain compliant. The inoperability, deficiency, breach or unauthorized use of any of these security structures or systems can result in risk to the airport operator, potential TSA findings and penalties, liability and other adverse conditions.

Typical airport security structures and systems include but are not limited to perimeter gates and boundaries, lighting, CCTV, video surveillance, under vehicle inspection systems, access control system including alarm management, perimeter intrusion detection systems, Identity Management Systems (IDMS), credentialing and visitor management systems, apps or systems to record aviation worker screening reporting requirements, and vendor delivery inspections.

These measures will differ by airport. Access control requirements flow throughout various security and non-security-centric departments including Facilities, Operations, IT, etc. Thus, the workforce planning considerations need to include these security-related functions in their assessment.

- **Inspection of Merchandise/Consumables intended for the Sterile Area:** Airports must inspect merchandise for signs of tampering, alteration, and/or suspicious items that are prohibited from entering the Sterile Area. Airports must also inspect unbadged delivery personnel to ensure they do not possess items on the TSA Prohibited Items List (PIL). Airports typically refer to this function as “vendor deliveries” in their staffing model.
- **Audits and Inspections:** In addition to the inspections cited above, airports must conduct a monthly audit of concessionaires, restaurants, and vendors operating in the Sterile Area to ensure they do not display, give away, sell, or maintain in their inventory items on the PIL, except as permitted. Permitted items include knives used for food preparation, which must be controlled and audited at specific intervals.
- **Surveillance and Patrols:** Airports must maintain a security presence, including the use of surveillance systems and regular patrols of secure areas.
- **Incident Response:** Procedures must be in place for responding to security incidents and breaches, including coordination with law enforcement, emergency response teams, and mandatory notifications to TSA.
- **Training:** Airport badge holders and personnel performing security functions must receive regular training to ensure they understand security protocols and their responsibilities. TSA mandates security training for certain roles and tasks outlined in federal security regulations (e.g., Airport Security Coordinator [ASC], law enforcement personnel, aviation worker screening, Trusted Agents, Authorized Signatories, and vendor inspections).
- **Reporting Requirements:** Airports must report certain security incidents and breaches to TSA and maintain documentation of security measures and incidents.
- **Law Enforcement Support, Personnel Qualifications, and Records of Law Enforcement Response:** Airport operators must ensure law enforcement personnel meet the requirements and qualifications specified in 49 CFR § 1542.217, which include training standards while on duty at the airport. Airports must also consider 49 CFR § 1542.215, which states that airport operators must provide law enforcement personnel in the number and manner adequate to support its security program. The airport must ensure that law enforcement personnel are available and committed to respond to an incident when requested by an aircraft operator or foreign air carrier that has a regulated security program.

These regulations may impact the airport’s planning and budgeting for security roles. Several airports interviewed indicated that airport law enforcement fulfills this requirement in addition to assisting the airport in performing security responsibilities, functions, and measures outlined in the ASP and supplemental regulations.

There is no single approach, strategy, or trend as to how airports structure their workforce to perform these security-related roles and responsibilities. More information on staffing strategies is available in **Section 3: Airport Staff vs. Third Party Security** and **Section 4: Security Organizational Structure Analysis**.

2.2 Governance Structure and its Impact

Airports governed by authorities, cities, and counties were included in the interviews and research. The research found that airports owned and operated under an authority generally have more autonomy and flexibility in hiring than airports owned and operated by cities or counties. For example, airports governed by public entities often follow standardized or union/labor regulated pay scales, which may limit flexibility. While there are airport authorities at which the workers are unionized, airports managed by airport authorities might adjust compensation more freely based on market conditions and specific talent needs.

Other challenges encountered by airports governed by a city or county include:

- Personnel structures and contracting methods that are not airport specific and may be unduly cumbersome and slow
- Job descriptions and classifications that are not airport specific or reflective of the airport operating environment do not capture the complexities of security positions, making it difficult to recruit, pay, and retain employees commensurate with other organizations
- Applicant requirements flowing from governing city or county regulations regarding requirements for education, residency, and fiscal contributions

Additionally, many airport authorities that employ their own law enforcement officers (LEO) can leverage their airport presence and roles to perform security-related responsibilities such as responding to door alarms, issuing security violations, inspecting the perimeter, and conducting other security-related inspections. One airport authority contracts for LEOs to perform these same functions.

However, as discussed in later chapters, many airports governed by a city or county have found creative workarounds to some of these challenges. For example, as detailed in Section 6, reclassification is a tool used by airports to ensure that the classification and compensation of the credentialing office personnel reflects the criticality and complexity of their role. Credentialing staff previously assigned a clerical title such as Records Clerk II have been reclassified with new titles, such as Airport Security Specialist or Airport Access Agent. In addition to a new title, Trusted Agents who have been reclassified typically receive a new job description, revised career band/job grade/classification, and higher compensation.

At one city-run airport, the Security department successfully obtained a pay raise for its employees by comparing compensation to other airports in the region and connecting recruitment issues to the lower pay rate.

2.3 Third-Party Security Contractors

Given the increasing and evolving demands placed on security personnel, and the challenges airports face during the employee hiring process, many airports turn to third-party contractors to carry out some of the mandated security assignments. Some airports employ multiple third-party contractors and split duties among them. The use of third-party security contractors is often identified as a cost-effective approach to meeting the personnel challenges faced by airport operators seeking to fill their security-related positions.

Cost is a major consideration when developing and staffing a security team, and contract security is generally less expensive. Hourly rates are often lower for contractors than airport employees, and typically the airport does not pay for benefits for contractors. Executive-level decision makers are able to easily understand the immediate cost-savings.

Airports also use third-party security providers because the burden of hiring and onboarding new employees is alleviated, as the staffing requirements are shifted to the contractor. The airport is responsible for selecting the third-party contractor, but the contractor hires its own personnel. In addition, the training of the new personnel is also the contractor's responsibility, with some oversight by the airport. Contractor oversight, management, administration and quality assurance is often a "hidden" airport responsibility that needs to be included in the workforce assessment and decision-making process.

Several airports cautioned that the immediate appeal of outsourcing to a third party may mask some of the associated complications with such an arrangement. For example, while third-party security contractors may appear to be less costly than direct security employees, security contractors require tracking and oversight to ensure compliance and job performance integrity; this tracking and oversight in turn requires airport employee time and effort. Also, the quality of the work may suffer as third-party contractors may not be as connected and committed to the organizational mission and culture. Additionally, security contractors often experience high turnover, so there can be a loss of institutional knowledge among the workforce and constant turnover of contract staff that affects the airport's operation, performance, and ability to comply with mandated security requirements.

The use of third-party security contractors is closely examined in the following chapter.

SECTION 3: AIRPORT STAFF VS. THIRD-PARTY SECURITY

Cost is a major consideration when developing a security team, and contract security is generally less expensive. Most of the airports interviewed also reported staffing challenges for their airport security positions. A competitive job market coupled with a long recruiting and hiring process makes onboarding airport employees a difficult and resource-intensive process. Outsourcing to a third-party security contractor—usually completed through responses to an airport RFP—can alleviate some of the demands on the airport. However, outsourcing has its own challenges. This section will review:

- Division of duties between airport staff and contractors
- Complexities associated with use of third-party security
- Option of using multiple security contractors

3.1 Division of Duties Between Airport Staff and Contractors

When designating responsibilities between direct employees and contract security, many airports consider whether the identified tasks are routine. Those responsibilities deemed more routine and “less risky” are the first choices to designate to contract security.

Contract security personnel are most likely to be tasked with conducting physical security access at vehicle gates, inspecting merchandise entering the Sterile Area, aviation worker screening, ID badge checks, curbside/traffic control at curbs, and monitoring exit lanes. Contract security may also be responsible for reporting security violations to airport officials. It is a standard practice for airport officials to direct contract security to contact the airport or law enforcement to resolve concerns arising in the course of their duties, such as alarm resolution, employees refusing to submit to screening, and other incidents requiring an elevated level of decision making and responsibility.

The more complex security responsibilities are often kept in-house. Direct airport security employees are generally responsible for ASP administration and maintenance, and ASC responsibilities including TSA security compliance, badging responsibilities, security inspections and audits, and oversight of the security contractor. Security violations are generally issued by Security, Operations, or Law Enforcement personnel.

Some airports use contract security to perform regulatory compliance inspections and audits required by the ASP, NAs, and SDs under the direction of the Security Manager or ASC. Another hybrid option includes using contract security to supplement airport staff during periods of staffing challenges. Airports that contract with a logistics provider to operate and staff a centralized receiving and distribution facility that conducts vendor delivery inspections report positive results and efficiencies. This delineation of security duties differs by airport, available resources, risk assessment, and other operating and legal factors.

3.2 Complexities Associated with Third-Party Security

When selecting a third-party contractor, cost is important but not the only consideration. Airports recognize that the lowest bid might result in higher personnel turnover and create an avoidable challenge as security personnel leave to find higher paying jobs. Many airports articulated a desire to ensure contract security are properly integrated into the larger security culture.

One airport is seeking better cohesion and synergy between contract security and the Aviation Security department. Currently, “contract security does not feel part of the mission.” It is critical that they understand “how they fit into the bigger picture and mission, and not just view their role as a post.”

To that end, many airports have started to mandate pay, benefit levels and ongoing training, and to incorporate these standards into the security contracts to improve retention and ensure the airport has consistently high quality personnel.

When selecting a third-party security provider, one airport includes in the RFP the salary it expects the security officers to be paid.

Another consideration is that security contractors require monitoring and oversight for quality control and compliance. Several airports stressed that these tasks are time and labor intensive, and often not considered and factored into the equation when calculating the cost savings of outsourcing.

3.3 Option of Using Multiple Security Contractors

Several airports interviewed employ multiple security contractors. One airport engages two security contractors, both of which report to the Airport Director of Security.¹ One contractor is responsible for curbside security duties, monitoring traffic in and out of the airport, patrolling the parking lots, patrolling inside the terminal (checking doors, suspicious individuals, and suspicious and unattended bags; checking Secured Areas; and checking exit lanes in the afternoon and nighttime), monitoring the delivery area dock, and issuing security violations. The other security contractor is responsible for security duties in the airport operations area, vendor inspections, aviation worker screening, door alarms within the Secured Area, perimeter checks, and issuing security violations for unauthorized access and items.

There are benefits and challenges to working with multiple security contractors. There is no single point of failure, and the redundancies can create a layered, robust approach to security. However, this arrangement also requires more oversight, as there are two contractors, two points-of-contact, and two relationships to manage. In addition, the contractors need to respect each other and not view the other as competition.

One airport interviewed that employs multiple security contractors has experienced the benefits and avoided the potential challenges of two separate security vendors. The airport implemented a continuous improvement process to improve the quality of inspections, which consisted of increased testing, additional training, and creating a collaborative team culture. This culture shift made the contractor feel like they are part of the same team and not “just a contractor.” They credit their success to their mission-driven approach to security.

One Cat X airport engages two security contractors, each with distinct areas of operation and responsibility. One contractor is responsible for areas “inside airport buildings” and non-regulated off-airport facilities owned or operated by the airport. This contractor oversees random aviation worker screening and monitors camera systems and doors. The other contractor is responsible for areas and functions “outside the buildings,” including

¹ This airport had previously engaged only one contractor, but in 2022 the City Council decided not to renew the existing contractor and selected two new contractors through a formal bidding process.

perimeter patrols, vehicle gates and vehicle inspections, construction gates, Part 1542 inspections, special events, and outside posts.

Both contracts have security responsibilities governed by Part 1542, but their scope of responsibility is differentiated and designated as “inside” or “outside.” Securing the different areas requires different skill sets, which allows the contractors to play to their strengths. For example, the indoor activities and responsibilities involve frequent passenger interaction and require more “soft skills” and a customer service attitude. This seemingly complex arrangement has led to a better span of control for security, and managing the two contractors has not been a problem. There is a weekly meeting with each contractor’s point of contact to review staffing levels and new officer training and address any issues that may have arisen.

SECTION 4: SECURITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Establishing and maintaining a secure airport environment requires a well-designed organizational structure and workforce staffing plan to support the various positions, functions, and responsibilities of the employees serving in security roles. Airports divide roles and responsibilities in various ways depending on their size, organizational structure, and resources.

The position with overall security responsibility for the airport varies across airports, and includes Chief Operating Officer, Director, Vice President, Police Chief, and Public Safety Manager. Most of these positions are at the executive level or report to the executive level, which is important as it provides visibility into the security workforce, their responsibilities, contributions, and challenges. This structure also ensures that security-related issues and workforce planning and development considerations are directly communicated to top airport decision makers. The few airports where regulatory responsibility was further down the organizational reporting structure stated they found it more difficult to surface security-related issues and obtain the necessary support and advocacy for future security needs, resources, projects, and plans. The position of the security function in relation to top airport executives in the organizational chart communicates the priority of the security program within the organization.

Airports comply with TSA requirements for an ASC with a variety of approaches. Many airports have one primary ASC and one or more alternate ASCs. The research also identified other unique approaches to ASC staffing and responsibilities:

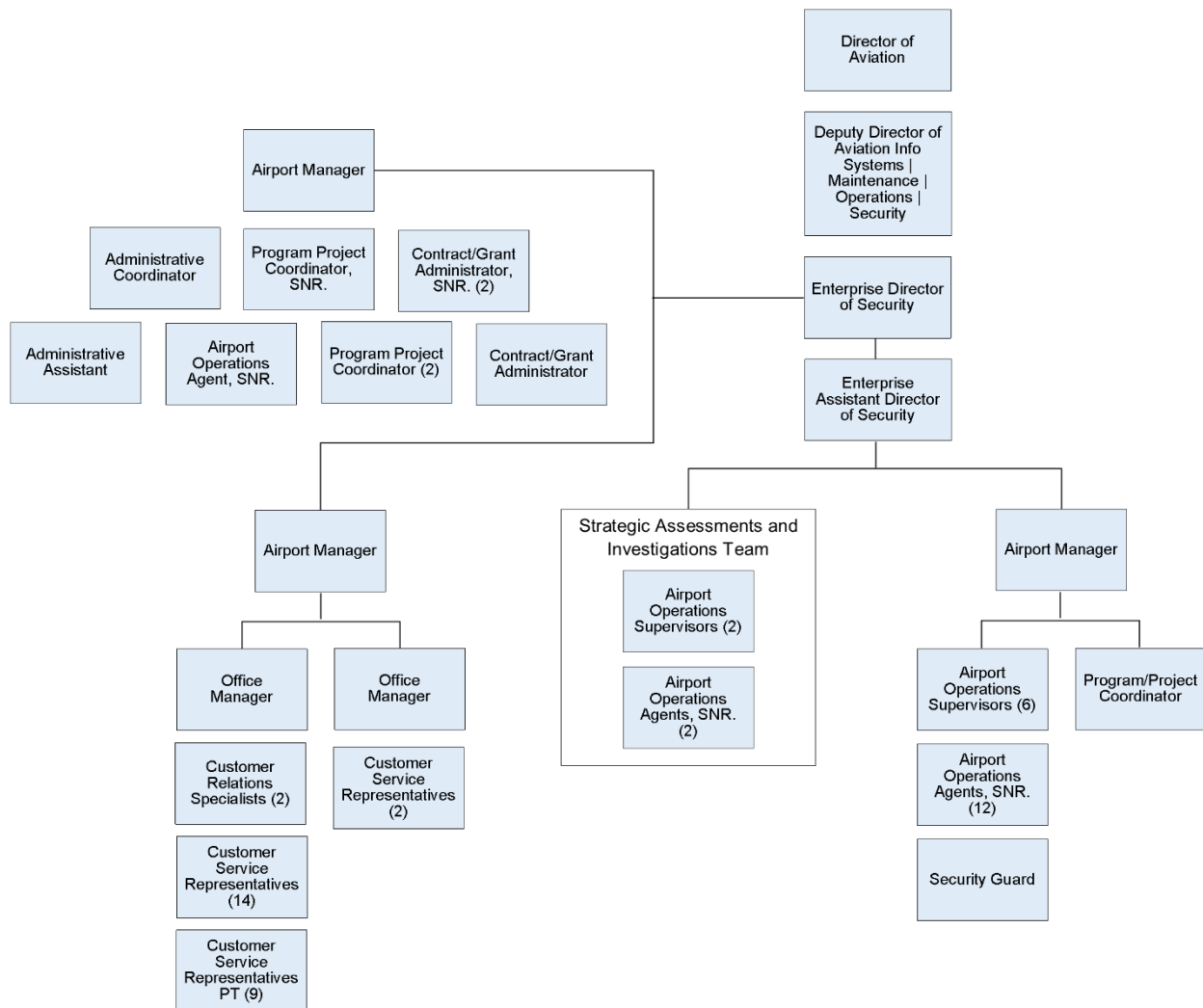
- One airport trains all Duty Managers to serve as ASCs and includes them in the ASP. Each of them functions as the primary ASC for the 24/7 on-call responsibility when they are on duty; they can elevate an issue to the primary ASC if needed.
- One airport has a primary ASC and six alternates, and they rotate the on-call status every week among the seven people.
- Several airports stated the primary ASC is responsible for ASP writing and maintenance, and the alternates are responsible for on-call incident response, daily operations, and investigation.

The research also identified several trends regarding regulatory responsibilities, roles, functions, and duties for security personnel, and the division of labor between direct staff, contract security, and law enforcement.

- All airports interviewed have collaboration between Security (direct employees and contract), Operations, and LEOs. Security, Operations, and LEOs collaborate on responses to door alarms and security incidents/breaches. These units also collaborate on ID badge checks, perimeter inspections, and issuing security violations/Notices of Violation. Outside of these collaborations, interaction between the groups and the assignment of security responsibilities varied.
- In addition to the Security unit, Operations typically responds to security incidents and assists with the enforcement of security requirements and rules and regulations on the airside. Law enforcement also responds to some security incidents as required.
- There is no single approach to designing functions and responsibilities for security-related roles. For example, at one airport the compliance team oversees the implementation of the ASP, and manages contract security, auditing, and security checks in the Sterile Area and on the ramp. The badging team handles compliance requirements for TSA NAs and SDs, which are central to airport operator credentialing responsibilities.

The staffing structure of security teams varied among the airports interviewed both in terms of the size of the airport and the type of overall airport governance. The following sections provide a deeper dive into four airports and their respective approaches in developing their security teams. These example airports are intended to show how different sized airports with different governance models approach their security staffing. These sections discuss the benefits of each approach, identify any unique positions, and review how the various roles interact and work together.

4.1 Cat X Airport, County Operated



At this airport, the Enterprise Director of Security reports to the Deputy Director of Aviation Information Systems, Maintenance, Operations, and Security, who reports to the Director of Aviation.

The Enterprise Director of Security is responsible for directing and administering the security and public safety program, and ensuring compliance with all federal laws, regulations and requirements, in addition to other duties. The Enterprise Director of Security monitors law enforcement activities to ensure compliance with federal regulations. The airport's law enforcement services are provided through a contract with the county Sheriff's Office.

The Enterprise Director of Security is the primary ASC, with four alternates including the Airport Manager and some supervisors; one additional alternate ASC is planned. Airport Operator staff are responsible for compliance with 49 CFR § 1542, the ASP, and other regulatory requirements under the direction of the Enterprise Director of Security. Reporting to the Enterprise Director of Security are three Airport Managers with distinct security portfolios:

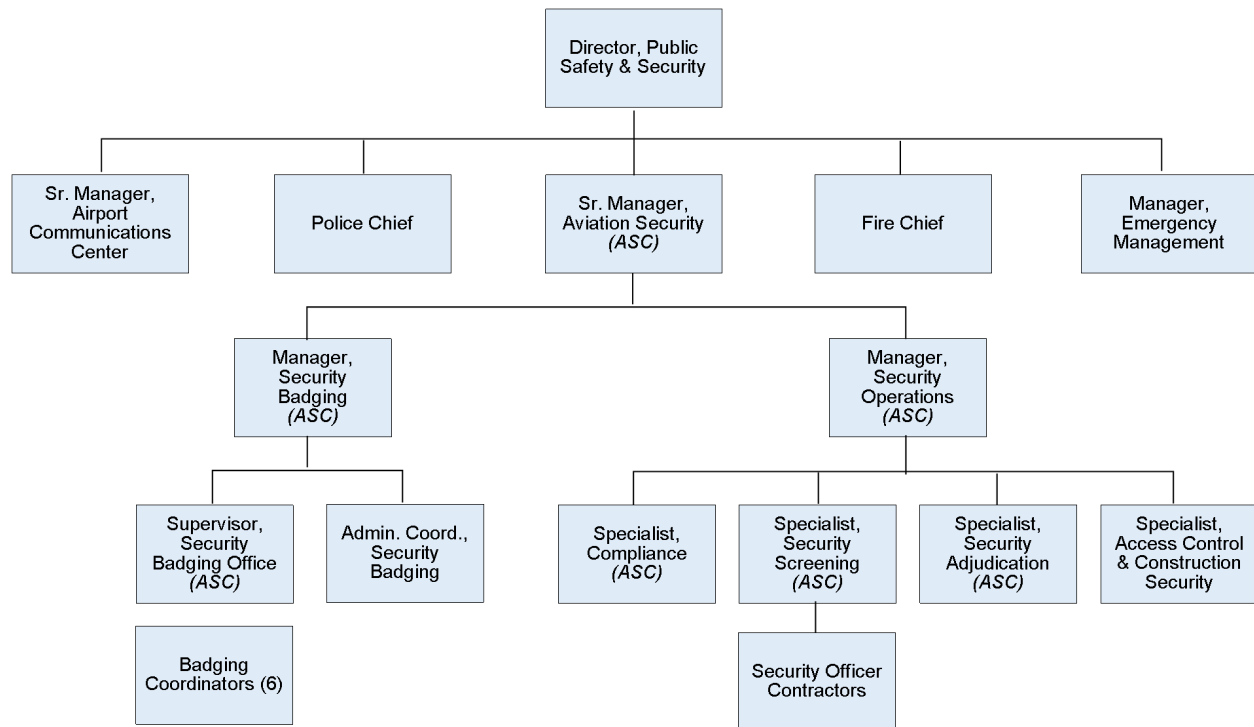
- Field operations, responsible for 24/7 security compliance, security operations, contract security and oversight of the Strategic Assessments and Investigation Unit
- Contract/grant administration, responsible for security contract procurement, administration, and oversight
- Credentialing

This airport created specific positions responsible for critical administrative contract and grant functions in support of the security program. Position titles in this unit include Senior Contract/Grant Administration, Senior Program Project Coordinator, and Administrative Coordinator. This division of labor efficiently alleviates the workload of the Manager of Field Operations, which is a 24/7 position with significant operational responsibilities. This model is a well-designed and defined organizational structure with clearly delineated functional responsibilities that reflect the airport's operating environment. Airports of all sizes may want to consider these roles and this division of labor when conducting workforce development and planning, reorganizations, or additions to staff.

The airport contracts with a third-party security provider that is responsible for access control, perimeter gate inspections, employee screening, search/inspection teams, and merchandise inspections. Contract security operates 24/7. One of the Airport Managers is responsible for compliance and overseeing the security contractor.

This airport also created the Strategic Assessment and Investigations Team to assess risk, determine root cause of security incidents, and conduct investigations. This unit conducts threat assessments by specifically assessing situations and individuals who have committed security infractions. For example, when aviation workers fail to return their security badges, this team determines how to mitigate the vulnerability and prevent this issue in the future. This airport reported that the Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team has proven to be a very effective, proactive resource. This is a dedicated function separate from the Security Department's Search/Inspection teams, which conduct random inspections of aviation workers.

4.2 Cat I Airport, Port Authority Operated



At this airport, Public Safety and Security manages the Security Division. The Senior Manager of Aviation Security reports to the Director of Public Safety and Security, who reports directly to the Aviation Director. The Senior Manager of Aviation Security oversees the Security Operations and Security Badging departments and is the primary ASC. There are six alternate ASCs that rotate every week for on-call availability.

The organizational structure is unique because the Communications Center, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Emergency Management Manager, and Senior Manager of Aviation Security all report to the Director of Public Safety and Security. This is significant as it ensures security and public safety issues, operations, resource levels, and planning considerations are directly communicated to the same top airport security decision maker. The organizational structure creates a systems approach in which the operation is viewed as a single unified system as opposed to a collection of individual parts.

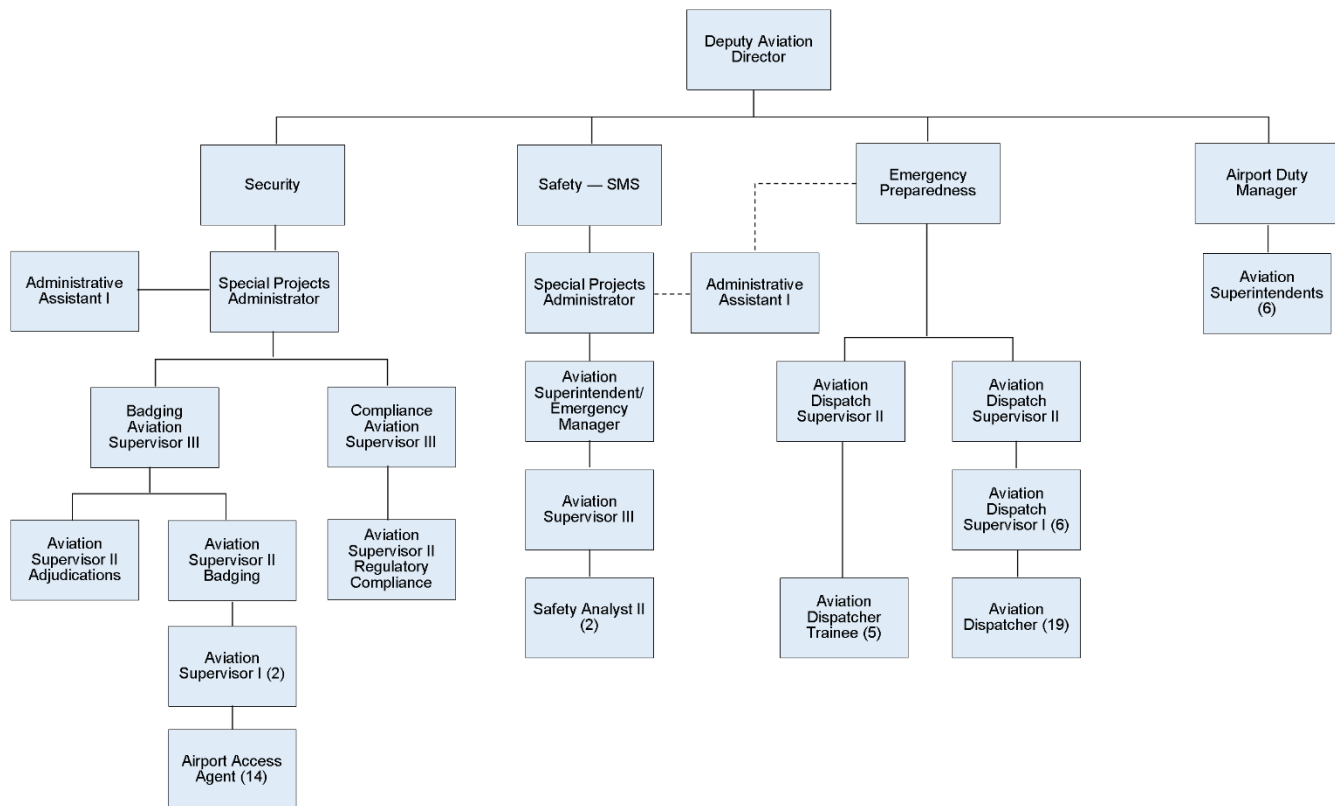
The Security Division is divided into two sections: Badging and Security Operations. Security Operations staff are responsible for physical security infrastructure and TSA compliance, badging, the ASP, and other regulatory requirements. The Security Adjudication Specialist is required to hold the Trusted Agent certification; all others in Badging are also encouraged to pursue this certification.

The airport contracts with a third-party security provider that is responsible for perimeter gate inspections, employee screening, search/inspection teams, and merchandise inspections. Contract security is a 24/7 operation. The Manager of Security Operations, is responsible for the management of security contracts, ensuring compliance with contract language, required staffing levels, and the development and updating of process documents.

The Access Control and Construction Security Specialist is an innovative role dedicated to performing functions and projects that require access control expertise. This role manages access control and

provides technical assistance to aviation security management and stakeholders. This position coordinates with the Port Construction department and contractors to ensure airport construction projects are compliant with TSA regulations, and that security systems and infrastructure are properly implemented. This position might be valuable for airports to consider.

4.3 Cat X Airport, City Operated



In this structure, the Public Safety and Security Deputy Aviation Director reports to the Assistant Aviation Director who reports directly to the Aviation Director. The Security branch has two sections—Badging and Compliance—both of which are overseen by a Special Projects Administrator.

The primary ASC is the Special Projects Administrator, and the five Airport Duty Managers serve as the ASC on duty for incident management and reporting. The Deputy Aviation Director also serves as an alternate ASC.

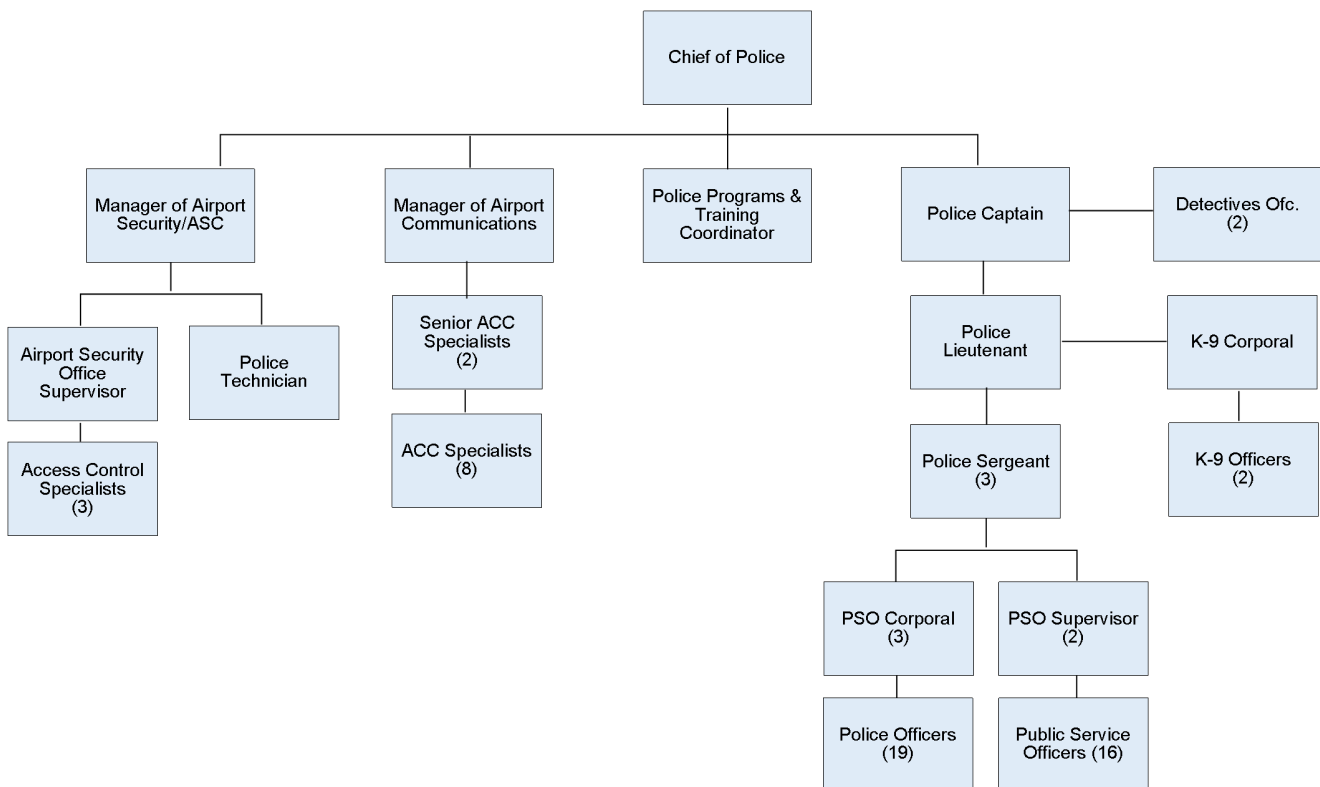
Credentialing staff are required to take American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) Trusted Agent certification, and are classified as Airport Access Agents.

The Special Projects Administrator is responsible for overseeing the two security contractors employed by the airport. One contractor is responsible for areas inside airport buildings and non 1542 locations on airport property, the other is responsible for areas outside the buildings (perimeter, vehicle gates). Reporting to the Special Projects Administrator is the Compliance Aviation Supervisor III, who assists the Special Project Administrator with compliance, including testing security guards when the Special Project Administrator is unavailable. The Compliance Aviation Supervisor III also performs

other compliance duties such as perimeter checks, drafting amendments for the ASP for ASC approval, change condition, inspections, knife audits and serves as the construction liaison.

This airport has Airport Duty Managers who are involved in all events and incidents on the airfield and are designed to be a “neutral third party” with a blended perspective that breaks down functional silos across airport departments, including Operations, Maintenance, Facilities, Planning and Environmental, Business Property, etc. The Airport Duty Manager position reports to the Public Safety and Security Deputy Aviation Director. This role was created to provide 24/7 coverage by someone with broad knowledge of airport operations and emergency response, and is empowered with decision-making authority. Airport executive teams rely on the Airport Duty Manager to make decisions and give direction in their absence.

4.4 Cat I, Airport Authority



At this airport, all security functions fall within the authority of the police department. The Chief of Police reports to the Chief Operating Officer, who reports to the Airport President/CEO. The security staff are responsible for TSA compliance, credentialing, ASP, perimeter gate inspections, random inspections, employee screening, in conjunction with airport law enforcement. The airport does not use contract security. Credentialing employees are classified as Access Control Specialists and required to obtain Trusted Agent certification.

The Manager of Airport Security is the primary ASC, and the Police Technician has 24/7 on-call responsibility. Alternate ASCs are the Chief of Police, Police Captain, and Police Lieutenant. If the Police Technician is not available, one of the alternates assume on-call ASC responsibilities.²

The police and security both perform regulatory functions such as vendor delivery inspections to the Sterile Area, aviation worker screening, badge checks, vehicle inspections, patrolling gates and ramps, prohibited item checks, and door alarm response. This arrangement is notable because it is unusual to see LEOs tasked with this span of dedicated regulatory responsibilities. One of the reasons for this organizational structure and assignment of roles is that the LEOs are needed to supplement the minimal amount of security staff required to perform TSA-regulated security responsibilities.

This organizational structure results in significant benefits for the airport. Notably, staffing security-related functions in-house eliminates the need for the airport to hire contract personnel, thereby avoiding associated costs and responsibilities related to contract procurement, management, quality assurance, oversight, and other implications.

In addition, this airport praised their structure as a “one-stop shop” for disseminating and communicating new directives, which flow through their internal organization expeditiously. Sharing security responsibilities between the airport security team and law enforcement officers builds unity of purpose, and broader education and knowledge of TSA security regulations and mandated airport compliance activities.

² The Police Technician job description requires a minimum of two years of police-related training and two years of work experience in a law enforcement environment. The Police Technician assists with regulatory inspections, audits, testing, and follow-up on security violations.

SECTION 5: UNIQUE POSITIONS AND FUNCTIONS TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCIES

Several large airports reported they are able to maximize efficiencies by leveraging their in-house IT team. At one airport, the process begins with the security team developing an innovative idea for a security technology system, and then Security and IT meet to discuss the idea and concept. The collaboration culminates with IT developing a product for Security to implement within a few months. This streamlined process of leveraging in-house talent avoids the RFP process, which can be lengthy and cumbersome.

Several smaller airports found efficiencies using security software to log all incident reports, create workflows for security incidents, and build forms and decision matrices (yes/no decision trees) to guide security contractor actions and responses, resulting in higher performance levels.

During the research, some novel hybrid positions were noted. These positions often cross traditional department boundaries and/or reporting structures, increasing efficiencies and maximizing information flow and leading to superior situational awareness at the airport. These positions include:

- Access Control and Construction Security Specialist
- Airport Duty Manager
- Crime Data Analyst
- IT Business Analyst
- Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team

Each of these positions is reviewed below.

5.1 Access Control and Construction Security Specialist

One airport created an Access Control and Construction Security Specialist responsible for managing access control systems, managing and supporting projects within the Security Operations Department, and managing and supporting external projects requiring access control expertise. The Specialist coordinates with the airport construction department and external contractors to ensure airport construction projects comply with TSA regulations, and that security systems and infrastructure are properly implemented.

5.2 Airport Duty Manager

One airport has an Airport Duty Manager who is involved in all events and incidents on the airfield, and is designed to be a “neutral third party” equipped with a blended perspective that breaks down functional silos across different airport departments, including Operations, Maintenance, Facilities, Planning and Environmental, Business Property, etc. This position is reviewed in Section 4.3.

5.3 Crime Data Analyst

Several airports indicated that they have an analyst position on staff that reviews historic crime data, intelligence analysis, and other information/data to enable security to take a more threat-based approach to crime prevention. The analyst may be able to identify common trends in criminal activity or law enforcement responses, which can be used to inform prevention and preparedness activities. Also, this

analysis can be used to justify security program capital improvements when contextualized within a threat landscape that has been documented.

5.4 IT Business Analyst

One airport created the role of IT Business Analyst to perform IT contract and associated administrative functions. This employee is a subject-matter expert with an IT background who is responsible for managing multiple technology-based contracts that support security (e.g., CCTV contract, IDMS, computer-based training). This position serves as an IT liaison and allows the Security Managers to dedicate their time and attention to operations and regulatory obligations.

5.5 Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team

One large airport created a Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team to conduct threat assessments related to employee security violations. This unit is composed of direct staff who are charged with investigating security violations and conducting threat assessments of the responsible individuals. For example, when aviation workers failed to return their security badges, this team determined how to mitigate the vulnerability and prevent this issue in the future. This airport reported the Strategic Assessments and Investigations Team to be a very effective, proactive resource.

This is a dedicated function that is separate and distinct from the Security Department's Search/Inspection teams, which conduct random inspections of aviation workers entering the Secured Area from the Sterile Area and perform other regulatory requirements related to employee inspections. This unique organizational structure and design, including a dedicated staffing plan, delivers significant value to the airport and is a valuable model for other airports to study and replicate, as appropriate, in their operating environment.

SECTION 6: RECLASSIFICATION OF CREDENTIALING PERSONNEL

Many airports have reclassified their credentialing staff to better reflect the responsibilities of a Trusted Agent. Nearly 75% of the airports interviewed for this project had reclassified or were in the midst of the process.

A Trusted Agent—a regulatory term defined in the TSA SD 04-08 series—is “an airport operator employee or agent who collects information from applicants and current airport ID media holders used in the CHRC and STA, transmits the information to a Designated Aviation Channeler, authorizes the issuance of ID media, or issues the ID media.”

This section reviews:

- Rationale and motivations for reclassifying security positions
- Overview of the reclassification process

6.1 Rationale and Motivations for Reclassifying Credentialing Personnel

The purpose of the reclassification process is to recognize the importance of credentialing and its associated TSA regulatory responsibilities, which are often not accurately reflected by the traditional job classification of “clerical/administrative” or similar entry-level positions used by airports. For example, credentialing staff previously assigned a clerical title such as Records Clerk II have been reclassified with new titles—e.g., Airport Security Specialist, Airport Access Agent or Security Badging Coordinator—that are distinct from entry-level positions and more accurately reflect the responsibilities of a Trusted Agent.

Reclassifying credentialing staff is a strategic decision that aligns with both operational excellence and employee satisfaction, ultimately strengthening the entire airport security ecosystem. During the past 13 years, Trusted Agent certification programs have been developed by industry associations and training companies to provide a dedicated training program, and in some cases a professional certification, in recognition of the complexities, regulatory responsibilities, and expertise of this position, which requires knowledge of TSA security requirements, regulations, SDs, NAs, and the ASP.

Airports governed by city and county authorities face challenges with the reclassification process because generic position titles of city and county employees generally do not correlate with the level of responsibility, job-specific knowledge and skills, and risk associated with airport security positions. Similarly, the ability to reclassify credentialing office staff will be impacted by whether this workforce is classified as administrative or union in any governance model. The terms of collective bargaining agreements and union contracts will dictate pay scales, titles, job requirements and several other conditions.

Reclassification can greatly enhance job satisfaction, retention, and the integrity of the badging process. To achieve this, a sponsor and advocate is necessary, and this role may be performed by the security manager or an executive responsible for security. In addition to securing a sponsor, airport executives need to take a strategic and collaborative approach, gathering industry data and successful practices from other airports, and working closely with HR and other relevant departments.

6.2 Overview of the Reclassification Process

The majority of the airports interviewed who had reclassified their credentialing office staff experienced a positive to very positive impact on employee retention, employee satisfaction and engagement, and the overall credentialing operation. The reclassification process can be lengthy and complex to justify and receive approval for, but the results are rewarding.

A successful process of reclassifying credentialing office staff requires a strong rationale, detailed justification, executive advocacy and sponsorship, funding, and approval by a wide range of decision makers in the organization and governance body. The same process applies to airports with a credentialing workforce governed by a collective bargaining agreement or union contract. A sound justification is necessary to obtain buy-in and an agreement from the union to reclassify jobs and develop new job classifications that are tailored to the work performed by the credentialing office Trusted Agents.

Benchmarking other airports who successfully reclassified their credentialing staff may be valuable to learn from their experience; obtain comparative data such as titles, responsibilities, and compensation; and understand relevant key performance indicators that demonstrate improvement in employee retention, morale, and engagement, and compliance findings, etc.

Using data derived from an organization's Employee Satisfaction Survey or other sources such as exit interviews and HR metrics can justify reclassification and demonstrate how and why the current classification of roles in the credentialing office is not meeting staffing needs. For example, the current roles may be linked to poor morale, costly turnover, and lack of employee development and career progression opportunities. Sponsors of reclassification use data to prove their case that employees leave the airport due to not being paid based on industry standards, contributing to high rates of employee turnover.

A strong business case for reclassification and education of key decision makers across the organization (e.g., Security, Operations, HR, Budget/Finance) is integral to gaining approval to reclassify Trusted Agents. The same business case model paired with executive-level sponsorship is applicable to attaining approval to reclassify other security positions and titles beyond credentialing staff.

The reclassification process is complex and requires the input and collaboration of different airport stakeholders. Specifically, security personnel will need to work with HR and airport executives to gain their support and understanding of the process. The following recommendations can assist airports considering reclassification.

COLLABORATION WITH HR

- Request a position review based on the Trusted Agents' specific responsibilities, such as regulatory duties and handling Personally Identifiable Information. Emphasize the financial risks, including TSA fines associated with poor performance in this role, that distinguish it from other clerical positions.
- Use data derived from an organization's Employee Satisfaction Survey or other sources (e.g., exit interviews, HR metrics) to justify reclassification and demonstrate any reasons why the current classification of roles in the credentialing office is not meeting staffing needs.
- Benchmark other airports that have successfully reclassified their credentialing staff to gather insights on processes, performance metrics, and justifications.

- Ensure that the classification and compensation of credentialing staff reflect the criticality and complexity of their role, which is crucial for mitigating insider risks and complying with TSA security regulations.

AIRPORT EXECUTIVES

- Gain the backing of key executives who can advocate for the reclassification, such as the Director of Security, Division Vice President, and Aviation Assistant Director/COO.
- Educate senior leadership and decision makers on the critical role of Trusted Agents in the badging process to secure their support for reclassification. Present compelling data and arguments to demonstrate why reclassification is necessary.
- Include the reclassification of Trusted Agents in the annual budget to secure the necessary financial support for this initiative.

SECTION 7: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECURITY AND HR

Building a strong relationship between the Security and HR departments is essential for effective recruitment and management of airport security roles. During the research, multiple airports expressed dissatisfaction with either the level of coordination between Security and HR and/or HR's understanding of the qualities needed in a candidate to meet the responsibilities of the job. Ensuring that HR fully understands the responsibilities and specifics of each security role requires intentional effort and collaboration. This section reviews:

- Aligning expectations between Security and HR
- Appreciating the challenges and limitations faced by each department

7.1 Aligning Expectations Between Security and HR

One effective approach to enhance HR's understanding of the responsibilities and specifics of each security role is to provide firsthand insight into security functions through activities such as ride-alongs, field tours, inspections, and relevant meetings. By participating in these activities, HR staff can gain a deeper appreciation of the daily demands, challenges, and nuances of security roles, which in turn allows them to better align recruitment and HR strategies with the actual needs of the department. Participating in such activities will also help when HR personnel are reviewing and revising job descriptions.

HR professionals play a critical role in supporting department leaders by delivering a comprehensive compensation and benefits program designed to attract and retain employees across all airport positions. This program begins with crafting and maintaining accurate job descriptions, which are essential for comparing roles internally and benchmarking them against the external market for competitive compensation, benefits, and work-life balance offerings. Given the complexity and size of the airport staff population, this can be a daunting task.

It is recommended to update job descriptions whenever there are significant changes in responsibilities, or annually at a minimum. This practice ensures that job postings accurately reflect the current requirements and expectations of each role, facilitating a more effective recruitment process and clearer communication between Security and HR. This practice also saves valuable time when a vacancy occurs. See **Appendix A: Example Job Descriptions** for examples of well-written, detailed job descriptions for a Security Badging Coordinator and Manager Security Operations. Department leaders who ignore requests to review and revise job descriptions leave HR staff with the assumption the position is appropriately described and in no need of review. Just as security is everyone's responsibility at the airport, it is the department leader's responsibility to ensure each job description is up to date. Department leaders who proactively collaborate with HR to regularly update job descriptions are more likely to ensure their positions remain accurately aligned within the compensation structure, benefitting both the department and the overall organization.

Strategic workforce planning is another key practice. Establishing and confirming the number of positions and any backfill approvals for the fiscal year reduces delays in the recruitment process and minimizes the time spent on administrative approvals. This preparedness allows the Security team and HR to act swiftly when vacancies arise.

7.2 Collaboration During the Recruiting and Hiring Process

To foster mutual understanding and appreciation of each department's challenges and limitations, it is important to collaborate on the desired knowledge, skills and competencies of the candidate, their role, and any essential information provided by the hiring department, including challenges, issues, and cultural factors. It is important to document the recruiting strategy clearly. Utilizing a checklist to capture key recruitment elements helps in systematically addressing all necessary aspects of the hiring process and maintaining alignment between departments. Documentation can be as simple as an email outlining the responsibilities of both HR and the hiring manager, ensuring that each party understands their role and expectations.

A best practice for airports to consider is to create a recruiting strategy that is agreed upon and worked through by both Security and HR personnel. This collaborative approach not only enhances the understanding and cooperation between the two departments but also contributes to building a well-coordinated team capable of addressing the complex needs of airport security. Issues to consider in the recruiting strategy include:

- Position description and information, such as job title, responsibilities, compensation range, and reporting structure
- Length of job posting and external sources to be used (e.g., LinkedIn, industry-specific sites, and social media channels)
- Screening and selection of resumes
- Pre-screening process via phone or video
- In-person interview process and structure, including behavioral and situational interview questions
- Reference checks

See **Appendix B: Recruiting Strategy Checklist** for a detailed checklist that can be tailored to meet the needs of a specific airport.

SECTION 8: PREFERRED CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

When recruiting for airport security roles, identifying and defining preferred candidate competencies and skills is crucial for ensuring a high performance team. The discussion around education requirements, soft skills, and mandatory training and certifications plays a significant role in shaping effective recruitment practices. This section reviews:

- Education requirement and relevance, including the impact of governance structure
- Importance of soft skills and how to identify them during the recruiting/hiring process
- Mandatory training and certification requirements

8.1 Education Requirements and Relevance

Entry-level security and credentialing positions commonly require a high school diploma or equivalent. Specialist positions either require or desire college-level education, with a bachelor's degree being the most common requirement. Some airports expressed that a college degree was less important than the experience and competencies of the applicant. For positions such as Security Operations Specialists, experience in aviation or physical security, as well as training and industry certifications are desired. Most of the airports interviewed included broadly stated education requirements for positions beyond the first level. Many security positions have traditionally required formal education, such as degrees in aviation management, criminal justice or other related fields of study. The impact of governance structures—such as organizational policies and industry regulations—can dictate the necessity and level of these educational prerequisites. See **Appendix A: Example Job Descriptions** for examples of well-written, detailed job descriptions for Security Badging Coordinator and Manager Security Operations.

One airport has a narrow education requirement that poses some challenges. The airport only accepts candidates with a bachelor's degree in aviation management or criminal justice, a practice that limits the applicant pool. This requirement also excludes candidates with a law enforcement or military background who lack this credential. The airport must comply with this education requirement because the airport is city owned and operated, and this is a city regulation.

In some cases, there is potential to substitute formal education with lived skills or military experience. For instance, several airports recognized that veterans or individuals with significant military backgrounds have the practical skills and discipline required for security roles, making formal educational qualifications less critical. This shift acknowledges that practical experience and demonstrated capabilities can sometimes be as valuable, if not more so, than traditional academic credentials. Some airports offer an education exemption in which each two years of applicable experience may be substituted for a year of required education.

8.2 Importance of Soft Skills

In addition to technical competencies, soft skills are increasingly recognized as essential for success in airport security roles. Soft skills such as communication, problem solving, and emotional intelligence contribute significantly to workplace effectiveness and team cohesion. These skills enable employees to handle challenging situations with tact, collaborate effectively with colleagues, and adapt to changing conditions.

One airport has prioritized the identification of strong writing skills in applicants. Their rationale is that better writing leads to higher quality security incident reports to support prosecution of criminal violations.

Strong understanding of policy is also cited as a desired skill because aviation security work is policy driven. Several security managers expressed that critical thinking, relationship building, and the ability to navigate in grey areas are higher priorities than prior aviation security experience.

Identifying soft skills during the recruiting and hiring process can be achieved through various methods. Behavioral interview questions, situational assessments, and role-playing exercises can provide insight into a candidate's interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities.

During the applicant interview process at one Cat X airport, the Manager of Aviation Security and Regulatory Compliance provides scenario-based questions with multiple components to observe how applicants handle stress and process information.

Behavior-based interview questions aim to reveal how a candidate will react in a given situation, collaborate on a team, interact with the public, etc. These questions can provide additional evaluation considerations among candidates who may appear equally qualified for the position. Behavioral interview questions tailored for airport security positions, should focus on key competencies like attention to detail, situational awareness, decision making, communication skills, and teamwork. For example, when assessing a candidate's attention to detail relevant questions could be:

- Describe a time when you noticed something out of place or suspicious in a work environment. What steps did you take, and what was the outcome?
- Can you provide an example of a situation where your attention to detail helped prevent a potential problem?
- Tell me about a time when you had to follow strict procedures. How did you ensure you did not miss any steps?

Creating a situational assessment for an airport security role involves designing scenarios involving challenges that candidates may face on the job. The assessment should evaluate critical skills like problem solving, decision making (ability to make fast and sound decisions independently), discernment (accurately assessing situations and taking appropriate actions), situational awareness, communication, and adherence to protocol. An example scenario is provided below for a security guard/officer.

Suspicious Behavior Identification and Response

Scenario:

You are monitoring a crowded terminal when you notice an individual behaving unusually. The person is pacing near the security checkpoint, frequently checking their watch, and appearing visibly nervous.

Assessment Questions:

- What immediate actions do you take upon noticing this behavior?
- How would you approach this individual, if at all? What would you say?
- What factors would you consider before deciding whether to escalate the situation to your supervisor or law enforcement?
- How would you document the incident?

Key Competencies Assessment:

Situational Awareness, Decision Making, Communication, Attention to Detail

See **Appendix C: Situational Assessments** and **Appendix D: Behavioral Interview Questions** for additional information.

There are other creative approaches that can be used during the application process. For example, one airport uses a management testing tool. They invite applicants who meet their minimum qualifications to partake in a computer-based work simulation designed to measure a candidate's ability to effectively handle a variety of management-level situations. This management test battery measures competencies including but not limited to problem solving, leadership, decision making, team building, communication, and conflict management.

Additionally, reference checks and past performance evaluations can offer valuable information about a candidate's soft skills in previous roles.

8.3 Mandatory Training and Required Certifications

Mandatory training and certifications are crucial for ensuring that security personnel meet industry standards and regulatory requirements. Many airport security roles require specific certifications, such as those related to security regulations or emergency response. These certifications often need to be obtained before or shortly after employment begins.

Federal security regulations require airports to maintain an ASP and designate the ASC role. The ASC must, in accordance with 49 CFR § 1542.3, complete subject-matter training, as specified in the security program, to prepare the individual to assume the duties of the position. Most airports also train several individuals as alternate ASCs. In these instances, the certification is a condition of employment. A few airports also encourage, if not require, the credentialing supervisor and staff to obtain the Trusted Agent certification.

To support new hires in attaining these certifications, many organizations offer training programs and resources post-onboarding. These programs are designed to provide comprehensive instruction and prepare employees for certification exams. By investing in ongoing training and development, employers ensure that their staff meets required standards as well as foster professional growth and job satisfaction among employees.

Apart from the ASC and Trusted Agent certification, most airports do not require training or certifications pre- or post-hire. Although not required, many airports encourage and support employees interested in earning certifications such as the AAAE ACE–Airport Security, AAAE Certified Member (CM), ACI-NA US Airport Professional (USAP), and other industry designations. Airports generally agree that employees who possess these industry certifications are better positioned to advance within the organization. Airports that do require an industry certification post-hire give the candidate one year to obtain the certification.

One Port Authority offers a tuition reimbursement program. There is an application process in which the applicant explains how the education/training will enhance their role and benefit the airport.

SECTION 9: COMPENSATION CONSIDERATIONS

Offering competitive compensation rates is one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining qualified candidates. At all the airports interviewed for this project, pay scales were set either by HR or the representing union.

When determining compensation for airport security roles, the airport's governance structure plays a crucial role in shaping compensation strategies, as it establishes the framework within which pay scales are developed and approved. For example, airports governed by public entities often follow standardized or union pay scales, which may limit flexibility, whereas airports managed by airport authorities might adjust compensation more freely based on market conditions and specific talent needs. (As noted earlier, there are some airport authorities at which the workers are unionized, and these airports also operate under constraints.) Budgetary constraints, the level of oversight, and the decision-making process further complicate the ability to revise compensation pay rates. This section reviews:

- Importance of the job description
- Factors to consider other than direct compensation

9.1 Compensation Study

Regardless of constraints, compensation rates are not static; they are frequently reviewed and adjusted to remain competitive and fair. A compensation study can be a valuable tool in this process, as it provides data-driven insights into industry standards, ensuring that the airport's pay rates are aligned with those of similar roles in the industry. This data-driven approach not only helps in retaining current employees but also in attracting new candidates. Airport HR departments typically rely on third-party compensation consultants to conduct the study. Many also include the ACI-NA Compensation and Benefits survey, as it provides credible, reliable, and legally compliant market compensation data for airport-specific roles.

A detailed job description is essential for a successful compensation study because it provides a clear and accurate representation of the role being evaluated. The job description outlines specific duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and required skills, which are crucial for making accurate comparisons with similar positions in the market. Without a well-defined job description, there is a risk of mismatching roles during the benchmarking process, leading to inaccurate or misleading compensation data. This is particularly true for public entity-governed airports where job descriptions are often general and less applicable to aviation security.

Furthermore, a detailed job description helps ensure that the compensation study considers all relevant aspects of the job, including its complexity, impact, and required expertise. This allows for a more precise assessment of the role's value within the organization and the broader industry. It also aids in identifying any unique elements of the job that may warrant additional compensation, such as specialized skills or high levels of responsibility. Some positions, such as security positions classified in an entry-level series, are required to retain and memorize a significant amount of technical knowledge—e.g., the ASP, TSA SDs and NAs, auditing practices, checklists, and guidelines—but this technical knowledge and level of complexity is not reflected in their job classification and compensation.

9.2 Importance of Detailed Job Descriptions

By providing a comprehensive overview of the role, a detailed job description supports the creation of a fair and competitive pay structure, helping to attract and retain qualified candidates while ensuring internal equity and alignment with industry standards.

A comprehensive job description typically includes the following components:

- **Job Title:** Clearly states the position's title, reflecting the level and nature of the work.
- **Job Summary:** A brief overview of the role, highlighting its primary purpose and key responsibilities.
- **Duties and Responsibilities:** A detailed list of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities the job entails. This section outlines what the employee will do on a day-to-day basis.
- **Qualifications:** Specifies the required education, certifications, skills, experience, and any other qualifications necessary for the role.
- **Skills and Competencies:** Outlines the specific skills (both technical and soft skills) and competencies needed to perform the job effectively.
- **Reporting Structure:** Indicates who the employee will report to and any direct reports they may have.
- **Work Environment:** Describes the working conditions, such as the physical environment, typical work hours, and any travel requirements.
- **Physical Requirements:** Details any physical demands of the job, such as lifting, standing, or manual dexterity.

See **Appendix A: Example Job Descriptions** for examples of well-written, detailed job descriptions for a Security Badging Coordinator and Manager Security Operations.

The research team received many job descriptions that were well written from airports participating in the research. The team chose to highlight the examples in Appendix A because of some unique components of the job descriptions. For example, this airport provides an estimated percentage of time that the individual will spend on each of the identified Essential Functions. Required Skills and Knowledge are associated with a level (Intermediate, Advanced, Senior) depending on the job requirements, and the reporting structure is identified. The job description includes a category for Quantifiable Dimensions, including Direct and Indirect Annual Financial Impact. A Quantifiable Dimensions section is rarely seen but is impactful when describing the risk associated with the position being performed poorly.

9.3 Other Factors Candidates Consider

While compensation is a key factor in attracting and retaining security personnel, other factors may be equally important. These include offering comprehensive benefits packages, providing clear opportunities for career advancement, and fostering a positive work-life balance. By addressing these factors in conjunction with competitive compensation, airports can create an environment that attracts and retains top security professionals in a competitive job market.

SECTION 10: RECRUITING STRATEGIES

Once the foundational elements are in place, effective recruiting strategies are crucial for attracting qualified candidates to airport security roles, which require a unique combination of skills, experience, and dedication. A multifaceted approach that leverages various channels and partnerships can significantly enhance the quality and diversity of applicants. This sections reviews:

- Partnerships with colleges/universities
- Airport internships
- Aviation industry organization websites/job boards
- Non-aviation-specific job boards
- Veteran services and organizations representing veterans and former LEOs

By employing a combination of these strategies, airports can create a robust recruitment process that not only attracts a wide array of talented candidates but also ensures that those candidates are well suited to the unique demands of airport security roles.

10.1 Partnerships with Colleges and Universities

One highly effective strategy is building partnerships with colleges and universities, particularly those with strong criminal justice, security studies, or aviation programs. These partnerships can include guest lectures, career fairs, and on-campus recruiting events, which allow airport employers to engage directly with students who are preparing for careers in security and aviation. Additionally, establishing relationships with faculty members can lead to recommendations of top students, further improving the talent pool.

A report in the AAAE airportmagazine.net December 2022/January 2023 issue authored by the Senior Director of Human Resources at the Indianapolis Airport Authority describes creating opportunities for high school students through the Modern Apprentice Program (MAP) within the state of Indiana. MAP places high school juniors into specific department apprenticeships for up to three years. The students work part time and have some additional classroom studies. The airport commits to paying for their college or trade school tuition in the third year of the apprenticeship.

10.2 Aviation Industry Job Boards

Utilizing aviation industry organization websites and job boards is another effective strategy. Websites like those of AAAE or Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) provide targeted platforms where job postings reach a highly relevant audience. These sites attract candidates who are already interested and experienced in the aviation industry, increasing the likelihood of finding candidates with the right background.

10.3 Non-Aviation-Specific Job Boards

In addition to industry-specific platforms, broader job boards like LinkedIn, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter play a critical role in recruitment. These platforms have extensive reach and offer advanced search and targeting options, allowing employers to connect with a wide range of potential candidates, from entry level to experienced professionals. LinkedIn, in particular, is useful for networking and passive

recruiting, where potential candidates who may not be actively job hunting can be approached with opportunities.

10.4 Airport Internships

Airport internships offer another valuable recruiting tool. By providing hands-on experience, internships allow potential candidates to gain a deep understanding of airport operations and security procedures, while also giving employers an opportunity to evaluate the intern's performance and fit for a permanent role. Internships often serve as a pipeline for full-time hires, ensuring a steady flow of well-trained and motivated employees.

Several airports use college internship programs to recruit college students to work on the security team and enhance the team composition by bringing new skills. These internships are designed to provide college students with experience working in airport industry careers while enriching their educational goals and personal and professional development.

10.5 Veteran and LEO Organizations

Tapping into veteran services and organizations that represent former military personnel and law enforcement officers is a highly effective strategy for filling airport security roles. Veterans and former LEOs often possess the discipline, attention to detail, and security expertise required for these positions. Partnering with organizations such as Airport Law Enforcement Agencies Network, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Hiring Our Heroes, the Wounded Warrior Project, The Pentagon's SkillsBridge program, or specialized job boards for veterans or LEOs can help in reaching this skilled and highly capable demographic.

One novel airport recruitment program is the Veteran Fellowship Program. This program is designed to foster a seamless experience for veterans transitioning from active duty to the civilian work environment by providing an opportunity to gain practical work experience in an aviation operating environment.

SECTION 11: HIRING PROCESS

Hiring qualified candidates for a secure work environment can present challenges for airports. Background requirements disqualify some individuals and the process takes time during which some applicants may accept a position with another employer. It is unrealistic to believe the hiring process will be quick; an airport cannot meet an applicant one day and welcome them to work tomorrow. This lengthy hiring process creates a burden on the applicant and places the airport at a disadvantage when competition for labor is high. This section reviews:

- Most common challenges in the hiring process
- Mitigation strategies and solutions
- Checklist of HR best practices

11.1 Most Common Challenges

Every airport interviewed reported challenges in the hiring process for security positions. The most frequently reported challenges are:

- Non-competitive compensation
- A long hiring and onboarding process
- Restrictive job requirements imposed by the city/county
- A competitive environment for a limited candidate pool
- Difficulties getting to know candidates during the hiring process, as candidates often present themselves in the most positive light and there is limited time to observe and assess them

Non-competitive compensation and a lengthy hiring and onboarding process are challenges faced by many airports. Airport security roles often require thorough background checks, training, and certification, which can extend the time from application to employment. A protracted process may cause candidates to lose interest or accept other offers before the airport can complete the necessary steps, leading to lost opportunities and increased vacancies.

Requirements imposed by the city/county also present major challenges for which airports have no recourse. Often pay scales are set by the city or county and the airport lacks the authority to increase rates, even when increases are necessary to remain competitive with other security positions in the area. There may also be other cumbersome requirements flowing from the governing city or county regarding education, residency, and fiscal contributions.

Airports governed by cities or counties often must adhere to employment requirements that limit their pool of qualified job applicants. One city-run airport requires a college degree and residency within city limits. Another city-run airport requires an 11% retirement contribution for all city employees.

A key strategy for mitigating these issues is improving coordination between HR and candidates to expedite the hiring process. Streamlining steps such as background checks, interviews, and onboarding procedures can reduce the time it takes to bring a new hire on board, decreasing the likelihood that candidates will drop out of the process. Leveraging technology to automate parts of the hiring process and ensuring clear communication with candidates about timelines can also help keep the process moving efficiently.

One airport pays at or above TSA wages to their employee screeners to attract and retain quality employees.

In a competitive job market, trying to identify the right candidate can be a frustrating process as few candidates may meet all the desired criteria. One airport's solution is to hire for attitude and train for skill. This security leader found that they were able to identify a positive attitude in the course of the screening process, and that this quality proved to be the most reliable indicator of candidate success at the airport.

11.2 HR Best Practices

To ensure that these strategies are effectively implemented, HR departments can use the following best practices to guide their activities:

- Establish clear timelines for each stage of the hiring process, from application review to onboarding
- Enhance communication with candidates, providing regular updates and setting clear expectations about the process duration
- Promote career development opportunities within job postings and during interviews to attract candidates interested in long-term growth
- Coordinate closely with city or county officials to understand and navigate any restrictive job requirements, seeking flexibility where possible
- Streamline the onboarding process by preparing all necessary paperwork and training materials in advance

See **Appendix B: Recruiting Strategy Checklist** for a detailed checklist.

SECTION 12: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Creating a positive workplace culture and implementing effective employee engagement and retention strategies are vital for maintaining a motivated and committed workforce in airport security roles. Understanding what matters most to employees and why they choose to stay or leave is key to developing a thriving work environment. This section reviews:

- Discussion of a positive workplace and its attributes, as defined by job candidates
- Examples of successful programs and approaches

12.1 What Matters Most to Employees?

Beyond compensation and a strong benefits package, many candidates are seeking a workplace they believe is making the world a better place, and where they see themselves making a specific and valued contribution for the benefit of the organization. The airports interviewed supported what the literature review documented: younger generations of workers, specifically Millennials and Gen Z, place a higher priority on sustainability and corporate responsibility when choosing between employers. These candidates are looking for a focus on mentorship and training programs to support career growth. Gen Z specifically values improved communication and personal connection with their peers and bosses.

12.1.1 Company Values and Mission

A clear and compelling company mission and values that resonate with employees can enhance their sense of purpose and alignment with the organization. As one HR specialist shared, when people believe in the work they are doing, they are more likely to feel dedicated to their job and strive to grow within their company.

12.1.2 “People First” Team Leader

A positive workplace culture is characterized by several critical attributes that contribute to employee satisfaction and engagement. One of the most significant factors is having a “people first” team leader. Leaders who prioritize their team’s wellbeing, show empathy, and support their staff in achieving personal and professional goals foster a more motivated and cohesive team.

At one airport, the Airport Security Manager conducts a one-on-one meeting with each of the 36 employees every year. The conversations focus on the career ambitions of the employee and identify opportunities and trainings for advancement.

12.1.3 Career Development

Positive workplaces commonly provide opportunities for employees to acquire new skills and knowledge relevant to their roles and career aspirations by offering workshops, online courses and certifications. The airport provides the tools to learn, opportunities to collaborate with other employees, and access to promotion.

One airport provides each employee with an “employee development fund” to use towards training, applicable to current or future positions. The airport also offers tuition reimbursement and AAAE training in addition to the employment development fund.

12.1.4 Mentoring

Mentoring programs are designed to foster leadership development and professional growth among employees within the department by providing mentorship opportunities to employees who demonstrate potential for future leadership roles. The participant works with their mentor to create a personalized development plan that aligns with their career aspirations and the needs of the department. This plan serves as a roadmap for the mentee's professional growth throughout the program, and offers a range of learning experiences, from on-the-job training and shadowing to formal education and professional certifications.

One airport has a formal mentoring program offered by the county in which the selected employee is briefed and exposed to all jobs and departments within airport. This program enhances their knowledge of the airport and aviation to enable them to "see the big picture," and offers on-the-job training and interactions with senior leadership.

12.1.5 Open Communications

Open communication is another cornerstone of a positive workplace culture. Employees appreciate transparency and the ability to voice their opinions and concerns. Regular feedback and clear channels for communication help build trust and ensure that employees feel heard and valued. This can be accomplished through regular one-on-one meetings, group meetings, or a combination of both.

One airport conducts All-Hands Quarterly Town Hall Meetings. The meetings are held between the first and second shift to maximize participation. This forum allows employees to hear directly from the Airport Director, and employees can ask questions. These forums provide an opportunity for managers to listen to employees and address concerns that are raised in real time.

12.2 Why do Employees Leave a Positive Workplace?

Even in a positive workplace culture, there are reasons why employees might choose to leave their position. One common issue is limited career advancement opportunities, especially if higher level positions are not available. Employees who are ambitious and seek to progress in their careers may look elsewhere if they perceive no viable path for advancement within their current organization.

Other positions within the airport may seem more appealing, offering better benefits, compensation, or growth prospects. For instance, employees might consider roles in different departments that provide more attractive opportunities.

Another factor, particularly relevant to the younger workforce, is the desire for a sense of purpose and the opportunity to make a significant impact. Security roles associated with less visibility and/or responsibility may struggle to provide this sense of meaningful contribution, leading some employees to seek positions where they feel they can leave a more substantial mark.

One airport uses an employee satisfaction survey to assess employee morale, determine where additional resources are needed, and provide insight into job development opportunities desired by employees. The anonymous survey gauges how employees perceive their work and provides meaningful feedback to management.

SECTION 13: METRICS AND JUSTIFICATION STRATEGIES

Although performance metrics have been used broadly in many fields to assist management in assessing performance of their processes and systems, metrics have not been widely used in aviation security due to the challenge of creating meaningful and consistent security measures. One airport stated, “many times security effectiveness is not tangible. And metrics, data collection, etc. are not always accurate enough to depend on.”

None of the airports interviewed stated they have developed an all-encompassing metric program for their security processes, but many spoke to the advantage of using metrics where applicable to assist them in aspects of their job functions. This section reviews:

- Why metrics are important
- The most common metrics
- Challenges with establishing metrics and collecting data
- Examples of successful metrics and data collection

13.1 Why Metrics are Important

When available, key activity and performance metrics enable the security manager to focus on higher risk activities, such as badges with unescorted access in the secure area. Metrics are also important to support security directors seeking budgetary approval for new initiatives, or additional staff or equipment. Metrics provide objective data to document the need for such initiatives. Metrics are also an important component of any performance management program and assessment of the security workforce. Security managers need to track the performance and satisfaction levels of their employees to maintain a robust security program.

13.2 Most Common Metrics

Some of the more common metrics used by airports to evaluate performance of their security posture are:

- TSA and internal inspection results
- Number and type of Letters of Investigation (LOI)
- Number of and response time to door or checkpoint alarms
- Prohibited items found
- Number of lost badges
- Length of time to receive badges
- Number of employees screened
- Results from contract security inspections and tests

All of these items are important to evaluate the effectiveness of a security program and can assist in justifying staffing or equipment resources. For example, one airport noted the increase in door alarms in the winter compared to the warmer seasons, which could be used to justify the need to replace door equipment or to increase staff to ensure doors are clear of debris, helping to reduce the number of door alarm responses. Another director examined the cost of new equipment, such as access control system

hardware, with potential efficiency gains that could save the airport money. Upgrading to more efficient equipment resulted in electrical savings totaling almost \$300K annually, amortized to \$1.6M savings.

Several airports use metrics in determining employee needs and satisfaction. The use of annual employee satisfaction surveys assisted the security manager of a large airport to ensure they were addressing the needs of the employees, and that their culture was at a high level in terms of the application of security processes and employee satisfaction. The manager went on to say the culture of their security division leads to very high performance levels and low turnover.

One airport uses metrics to evaluate the performance of security contractors by reviewing inspection and testing results, as well as TSA LOIs issued year over year. A large airport developed metrics to ensure their security contractor aligns with the airport goals through the training, testing and inspection process. The contractor completes a daily activity report that supervisors use to rate key functions, which then feeds into a scale system to provide an overall rating of the contractor's performance.

13.3 Challenges with Establishing Metrics and Collecting Data

The immediate and obvious challenge with establishing metrics and collecting data is that it can be resource intensive. Metrics are only valuable if the right ones have been selected. Metrics should deliver mission-critical data to help inform decision making. This requires a strategy to determine (1) what information needs to be collected or measured; (2) how to obtain this information and at what frequency; and (3) how and when to use this data. When many airports already report being short staffed and employees feel stretched thin, it may feel overwhelming to add additional job responsibilities.

Successful data collection in support of tracking metrics often requires a dedicated position to collect, analyze, and report the data. One large airport developed a position titled Aviation Security Analyst for which a core function is “analyzing information for the airport from a safety and security impact.” This airport uses a robust tracking system to drive the development of their Security Management System program. Another airport uses their data tracking system to track and classify security data looking for trends and areas they can proactively interject staff or equipment to bolster their security stance and head off issues before they occur. These positions are very similar to the rising use of crime or intelligence analysts in the law enforcement arena. More information regarding this topic is available in PARAS 0042 – Force Multiplier Strategies for Airport Law Enforcement.³

13.4 Examples of Successful Metrics and Data Collection

Several examples of successful data collection were identified during the research. One Cat I airport tracks wait times for badging appointments, number of employees screened, number of prohibited items found, and number of lost badges. They also track and classify security incident data. The Aviation Security Manager enters the data into a dashboard to keep a master repository, and analyzes the data to look for trends. When appropriate, the findings are shared with station managers and concession managers to increase their situational awareness.

One Cat X airport conducts employee satisfaction surveys across all departments. The survey gauges how employees perceive their work and allows them to provide feedback. All survey responses are anonymized, and the data is then categorized. Managers review the data to ensure their efforts align with identified employee needs. It was through employee satisfaction data analysis that this airport realized employees desired greater job development opportunities.

³ PARAS 0042: https://www.sskies.org/images/uploads/subpage/PARAS_0042.ForceMultiplierStrategies_FinalReport_.pdf

SECTION 14: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The topic of strategic planning yielded a wide array of responses from the interviewed airports; there is not a prevailing method or process used to approach strategic planning. Most airports report conducting some sort of strategic planning, but it is typically in the form of reviewing annual budget requests. Only a few airports approach their strategic planning in security as part of the development of a multiyear, airport-wide master plan. This section reviews:

- Importance of strategic planning
- Strategic planning opportunities

14.1 Importance of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning for the airport's security workforce is critical and should be performed periodically and at an established frequency. A strong strategic planning process typically would include all airport department representatives discussing the future of the airport as laid out in the required Airport Master Plan, and developing benchmarks for personnel adjustments in response to planned infrastructure changes, passenger growth, and anticipated regulatory changes. The advantage of this type of strategic planning allows all stakeholders to understand how the planned growth, or possible decline, will affect each department, and to create benchmarks to allow for a quicker implementation of personnel.

At one airport, the Director of Security reported that periodically (every six months to a year) they examine the organizational and department charts to identify gaps and develop a plan that includes changes or additions of positions/roles.

14.2 Strategic Planning Opportunities

Several airports approach their strategic planning in security as part of the development of a multiyear, airport-wide master plan. When possible, some security managers try to capitalize on this opportunity to establish goals related to airport growth, such as making the airport's Security Operations Center a 24/7 facility or justifying the need for additional staff based on planned construction.

One airport explained that in order to meet future needs for its security personnel and resources, it is necessary to connect departmental needs (e.g., position and budget requests) to components of the strategic plan. Similarly, these needs would need to be included in the airport's master planning and facilities planning.

Several airports participate in planned annual meetings with their HR department to discuss the past year and future needs, and to develop timelines for expected changes in personnel. Several other airports use a contractor such as a strategic workforce consultant to review their plans to ensure there are no overlooked areas, and to confirm the forecasting of future personnel needs and plans.

14.3 Need for Future Research

The development of activity- and performance-based metrics aligned with an organization's formal strategic planning and evaluation process may be valuable for identifying and assessing security workforce needs in the airport environment. Development of key performance indicators and a scorecard for assessing security-related positions could also be a very valuable tool for airports of all sizes, and may be appropriate for future PARAS research.

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SECURITY BADGING COORDINATOR

Official Title	Security Badging Coord	Date Revised	8/17/2023
Classification Specification	SEC_COR	Level	AD2
FLSA Status	Non-Exempt	Salary Range	5

PURPOSE

Responsible for authorizing and fingerprinting PDX Security Badge applicants, and for issuing and accounting for PDX Security Badges following federally mandated regulations and directives, including 49 CFR 1542, PDX Airport Security Program and the Port of Portland statutes and PDX Rules. Provide security badging information to new applicants and existing badge holders over the phone, by email and in person.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

% of Time	Description
90%	Receive, capture, process and evaluate new and renewal airport security badge applicant information and identity documents utilizing a specialized Identity Management System (IDMS) program. Print and issue airport security badges after ensuring the applicant has met all federally mandated airport badging requirements under Title 49 CFR 1542, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security directives and badging requirements in the PDX Airport Security Program (ASP). Assist new and existing security badge customers in person, by phone, and by email. Schedule fingerprint and training appointments for new and renewal applicants. Administer security, airfield driving, authorized signatory and airfield construction training via an interactive computer-based training program. Review and audit badge applications to ensure compliance with all regulations. Maintain a general knowledge of all security rules and regulations and provide guidance to badge holders. Troubleshoot and resolve badge holder inquiries and problems, such as access issues and dead cards. Troubleshoot and resolve equipment and software interface issues and collaborate with IT to resolve. Process requests for issuing metal keys, replacement (lost) badges, legal name changes, and custom seals approved by the Custom & Border Protection (CBP). Validate parking for all new applicants.
10%	Complete additional assigned responsibilities which may include conduct software training classes for Authorized Signatories, add and update employer badging data in the IDMS software, new company set up, act as the primary contact for stakeholders and conduct outreach to Authorized Signatories, communicate with internal stakeholders, closeout of companies in the IDMS software, track, collect, and bill for unreturned badges, process monthly badge billing and weekly deposits, review and analyze audit reports and data from the IDMS software, perform records retention duties, conduct badge and key audits, manage the appointment schedule for applicants needing fingerprinting and security training purchase operating supplies, Peripheral cleaning of IT equipment, process checkpoint and temporary passes, assist Aviation Security and Emergency Management Departments with special events, assist in the training of new Security Badging Coordinators.

1

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.



KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In addition to the knowledge and skills listed below, all Port positions require employees to:

- ☐ Demonstrate commitment to valuing differences among individuals and a passion for being inclusive.
- ☐ Promote safety as a guiding principle and a regular practice in accomplishing work, focus on safety improvements, and comply with safety and health policies and procedures.
- ☐ Show the utmost respect for others and act as a team player.

Knowledge	Level
Customer service protocols.	Intermediate
Professional email and telephone etiquette.	Intermediate

Skill	Level
Perform high volume and detailed work with accuracy.	Intermediate
Provide a high level of customer service to a diverse employee group and the general public, including some with disabilities or limited English skills.	Intermediate
Safeguard confidential and sensitive security information.	Intermediate
Manage multiple tasks and complete individual projects despite frequent interruptions.	Intermediate
Learn new processes.	Intermediate
Evaluate technical information.	Intermediate
Learn and use specialized software programs.	Intermediate
Learn to recognize and identify work eligibility documents including fraudulent documents.	Intermediate
Learn the training material for security and airfield driving topics.	Intermediate
MS Word, Excel, and Outlook.	Intermediate

QUALIFICATIONS

Education/Experience:

Unless a specific educational level is **required** for a job (e.g. JD for an attorney) and noted with an asterisk (*) below, additional experience may substitute for the education qualifications.

Degree	Subject(s)
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2

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.



N/A	2 years post-secondary education and/or training.
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Minimum Years of Experience	Description of Experience Required
1 - 3	Work experience in an office environment, use of word processing and spreadsheet applications. Experience in an aviation security environment preferred.

License and/or Certification:

License or Certification	Issuing Body	Preferred or Required
ACE Trusted Agent	American Association of Airport Executives	Preferred
Ability to obtain and maintain PDX security badge	PDX	Required

WORKING CONDITIONS

Work performed in an office environment with occasional travel to Port operating areas.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTACTS

Frequent interaction with Port of Portland employees, airline personnel, PDX tenants and vendors, construction personnel, and members of federal agencies including the TSA, FAA, and CBP, along with the general public.

SCOPE, DECISION MAKING, AND COMPLEXITY

Issue security badges after ensuring all regulatory and procedural requirements have been met within the IDMS program. Follow standard procedures. Occasionally make decisions outside of standard procedures escalating issues as necessary. Work must be completed with extreme accuracy as any failure can result in monetary penalties to the Port of Portland.

POSITION IN ORGANIZATION

Reports to	Supervisor, Security Badging	
Oversees	0	
Directly supervises	0	

3

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.



Indirectly supervises	0	
Provides work direction to	0	

QUANTIFIABLE DIMENSIONS

Direct Annual Financial Impact	N/A
Indirect Annual Financial Impact	Accuracy and regulatory compliance are critical as the Port of Portland can be fined \$13,910 per regulatory badging infraction by the TSA.

4

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.



MGR, SECURITY OPS

Official Title	Security Manager I	Date Revised	1/18/2024
Classification Specification	SEC_MGR	Level	MGR
FLSA Status	Exempt	Salary Range	16

PURPOSE

Manages the security operations section of the Aviation Security Department and provides tactical leadership to its employees to maintain day-to-day security operations and compliance at Portland International Airport. Position is responsible for regulatory compliance and enforcement of the Airport Security Program (ASP) required by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the management of security contracts, the administration of the access control system as required under 49 CFR Parts 1540 and 1542, oversight of security interests in airport construction, the investigation of security violations, and the implementation of education and outreach programs.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

% of Time	Description
25%	Interpret and enforce day-to-day implementation of the TSA-approved ASP while ensuring amendments, changed conditions, and notifications are received and processed by the TSA in a timely manner; coordinate and direct the efficient implementation of ASP directives, TSA mandates, and security strategies with Port staff and PDX stakeholders; interpret federal regulations and directives in order to develop and implement PDX-wide processes, procedures, and measures to meet compliance requirements; actively manage all regulatory compliance and employee screening issues and initiatives; assess the needs of PDX and develop action plans in accordance with TSA regulations; develop and implement security compliance and testing programs; oversee the development of outreach and communication programs to educate workers on airport security requirements and encourage compliance and reporting. Develop process improvements to maximize security program efficiencies and effectiveness.
20%	Act as the primary liaison with the TSA's mid-level managers in the areas of screening, regulatory compliance, and law enforcement to ensure the smooth implementation of security measures; ensure open communication between the TSA, airlines, customers, and other airport tenants on security-related issues including the management of security breaches and incidents. Oversee facility planning, security screening processes, and contract security staffing issues with TSA and Port staff.

20%	Supervise, mentor, and provide direction to the members for the Security Operations Department in the areas of access control, security officer contracts, employee screening, security compliance and testing, and security outreach and promotion. Work with staff on development plans and schedules to enhance department effectiveness. Ensure consistent application of enforcement actions for badge holder violations. Oversee policies for access control and help troubleshoot system anomalies. Manage aviation security operating and capital expenses by preparing and submitting budgets, approving and monitoring expenditures, and seeking efficiencies to maximize effectiveness while minimizing expenses; Provide back-up support for staff while they are out of the office. Oversee the management of contract security services to ensure compliance with contract language, required staffing levels, and the development and updating of process documents.
20%	Lead Security Operations interests in the planning and execution of airport construction projects to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and PDX physical security and technology standards. Review plan drawings to ensure that security boundaries are correct and federally regulated standards are upheld. Provide guidance and recommendations regarding physical security, access control, security policies, CCTV, and regulatory compliance. Attend pre-bid, pre-proposal, and pre-construction meetings to educate construction contractors about mandatory security requirements, operations, and PDX security badging procedures.
15%	As the alternate and, on occasion, primary Airport Security Coordinator (ASC), assist and represent the ASC in day-to-day responsibilities at meetings, policy interpretation, and compliance initiatives. Serve as the delegate for the primary ASC, facilitating meetings with TSA management, Port management, and airline concessions managers on behalf of the primary ASC as needed. Cover on-call ASC shifts as assigned, requiring 24/7 availability during assigned week rotations. While on call, make critical decisions regarding security, and communicate sensitive information between the Port Police and the TSA. Respond to the Emergency Operations Center to help manage the airport during irregular operations or incidents.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In addition to the knowledge and skills listed below, all Port positions require employees to:

- Demonstrate commitment to valuing differences among individuals and a passion for being inclusive.
- Promote safety as a guiding principle and a regular practice in accomplishing work, focus on safety improvements, and comply with safety and health policies and procedures.
- Show the utmost respect for others and act as a team player.

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.

Knowledge	Level
Aviation and airport operations.	Senior
Regulatory compliance principles.	Advanced
Understanding of equipment and processes used to conduct security screening of personnel and personal property.	Senior
Project management principles.	Senior
Customer service principles.	Senior
CFR 1500 series.	Senior
49 CFR 1542.	Advanced
Airport security programs.	Advanced

Skill	Level
Develop processes and programs.	Senior
Prepare budgets.	Intermediate
Prepare presentations.	Senior
Project and team management.	Senior
Contract management.	Intermediate
Balance customer service needs with security requirements.	Advanced
Interpret and develop security programs based on federal mandates.	Senior
Make decisions and communicate effectively in emergency situations.	Senior

QUALIFICATIONS

Education/Experience:

Unless a specific educational level is **required** for a job (e.g. JD for an attorney) and noted with an asterisk (*) below, additional experience may substitute for the education qualifications.

Degree	Subject(s)
Bachelor's	Aviation, Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, or related field.

Minimum Years of Experience	Description of Experience Required
5 – 8	Civil aviation or physical security operations.
2	Supervisory experience.

License and/or Certification:

License or Certification	Issuing Body	Preferred or Required
Valid Driver's License	State DOT	Required
Ability to pass and maintain a criminal history records check and security threat assessment.	PDX	Required
Airport Security Coordinator training certificate.	AAAE	Required within 6 months of hire.
ACE Security Certification	AAAE	Preferred

WORKING CONDITIONS

The Port supports a flexible hybrid work schedule. Work will be performed in both an office and remote work environment as determined by business need, and some regular, in office time will be required. Occasional portions of daily work occurring outdoors; indoor and outdoor exposure to weather and noise; moderate travel to other Port facility locations; may occasionally work irregular hours and beyond regularly scheduled hours. Week-long on-call duties every fourth week which may include response and recall; occasional travel to out of town for conferences.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTACTS

Frequent interaction with airline management and personnel; PDX tenants and vendors, construction managers and personnel; contract security guard services employees and management, managers of federal agencies including the TSA, FAA, and CBP, FBI, and local law enforcement, along with the general public.

Note: Contents of this position description may not be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and may be subject to change at any time at the discretion of Port Management.

SCOPE, DECISION MAKING, AND COMPLEXITY

Make decisions that are critical to the integrity of the airport's security programs and initiatives, policy and procedures for badge holders based on interpretation of regulations and directives. Required to make decisions for staff by interpreting the intent of regulations and provide work direction; analyzing federal requirements, and resolving interpretation requirements with customers or staff members. As the alternate ASC and while on call evaluate security-related information and determine notification requirements and problem solving to mitigation of vulnerabilities, decisions can have critical implications to airport security or operations.

POSITION IN ORGANIZATION

Reports to	Sr Mgr, Aviation Security	
Oversees	#	Notes (level, function, other information)
Directly supervises	3	
Indirectly supervises	0	
Provides work direction to	60	Security Guard Contractors

QUANTIFIABLE DIMENSIONS

Direct Annual Financial Impact	\$3M security services contract
Indirect Annual Financial Impact	\$1.8M budget

APPENDIX B: RECRUITING STRATEGY CHECKLIST

Recruiting Strategy Checklist

****To be completed collaboratively with Security, HR and the hiring manager.**

Position Status:

- ☐ New Position
- ☐ Retirement
- ☐ Replacement
- ☐ Restructure
- ☐ Promotion

Have proper headcount approvals been obtained?

- ☐ Yes

Position Information:

- ☐ Update Job Description
 - Confirm job title, key responsibilities, and qualifications.
 - Can experience be substituted for education? If so, at what equivalent level?
 - Clarify required vs. preferred skills, experience and education.
 - Is airport experience required?
 - Is supervisory or management experience required?
 - Is industry-specific experience or certifications required?
- ☐ Compensation Range
 - Clarify recruiting range – typically a subset of the full compensation range
- ☐ Who does this position report to?
- ☐ What titles report to this position?

Position Expectations:

- ☐ Identify how the role contributes to overall team dynamics and creating a safety and security culture.
- ☐ Objectives to be achieved in 90 days, six months, one year.
- ☐ Career growth potential.

Job Posting:

- ☐ Determine length of time position will be posted.
- ☐ Will resumes be reviewed as they are submitted or at the conclusion of the job posting?
- ☐ Post the position on airport website and job boards.

External Sourcing:

- ☐ Utilize LinkedIn, industry-specific sites, and social media channels.
- ☐ Leverage employee referrals and professional networks.
- ☐ Engage with industry associations and attend relevant job fairs or networking events.

Outreach:

- ☐ Create a targeted outreach list of potential candidates.
- ☐ Develop a compelling message that highlights the opportunity, company culture, and benefits.

Screening and Selection:

- ☐ Who will screen the resumes and what is the process?
- ☐ Screen resumes for required qualifications and relevant experience.
- ☐ Shortlist candidates who meet the key criteria.

Pre-Screening Process:

- ☐ Develop 3–5 key questions to assess fit (e.g., cultural fit, motivation, experience).
- ☐ Determine who will conduct phone or video interviews to pre-screen candidates.

Interview Process:

- ☐ Structure the interview process (e.g., number of rounds, who will interview, and interview format [one-on-one, panel, team approach, etc.]).
- ☐ Prepare interviewers with the key competencies and specific questions to assess.
- ☐ Include behavioral and situational interview questions.

Assessment Tools:

- ☐ Consider using assessment tools (e.g., skills tests, personality assessments).
- ☐ Evaluate cultural fit and potential for growth within the company.

Reference Checks:

- ☐ Conduct reference checks to validate the candidate's experience and fit.

APPENDIX C: SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Creating a situational assessment for an airport security role involves designing scenarios that simulate real-life responsibilities and challenges that candidates may face on the job. The assessment should evaluate critical skills like problem solving, decision making, situational awareness, communication, and adherence to protocol.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Decision Making:** Ability to assess situations quickly and choose the best course of action.
- **Communication Skills:** Effectiveness in conveying information and instructions clearly and respectfully.
- **Adherence to Protocol:** Knowledge and application of airport security procedures.
- **Stress Management:** Ability to remain calm and focused under pressure.
- **Problem-Solving:** Creativity and resourcefulness in resolving unexpected issues.
- **Teamwork:** Collaboration and coordination with other team members.

Implementation

- **Roleplay:** Candidates could be placed in a simulated environment where they interact with actors or trained professionals who play the roles of passengers, supervisors, or team members.
- **Written/Verbal Responses:** Candidates may be asked to describe or write down their responses to each scenario, explaining their thought process and actions.
- **Observation:** Assessors should observe and score the candidates based on their performance in each scenario.

Example situational assessments:

1. Suspicious Behavior Identification and Response

Scenario:

You are monitoring a crowded terminal when you notice an individual behaving unusually. The person is pacing near the security checkpoint, frequently checking their watch, and appearing visibly nervous.

Assessment Questions:

- What immediate actions do you take upon noticing this behavior?
- How would you approach the individual, if at all? What would you say?
- What factors would you consider before deciding whether to escalate the situation to your supervisor or law enforcement?
- How would you document the incident?

Key Competencies Assessment: Situational Awareness, Decision Making, Communication, Attention to Detail.

2. Handling a Security Breach

Scenario:

During a routine shift, you receive an alert that an unauthorized individual has gained access to a restricted area. This could potentially be a serious security breach.

Assessment Questions:

- What is your immediate course of action upon receiving the alert?
- How do you coordinate with your team and other airport security personnel?
- What steps do you take to contain the situation and ensure the safety of the public?
- How would you handle the aftermath, including reporting and reviewing the incident?

Key Competencies Assessed: Crisis Management, Teamwork, Decision Making, Protocol Adherence.

3. Handling a Lost Item

Scenario:

A passenger reports that they have lost a bag in the terminal. The bag contains important documents, and the passenger is visibly upset and insists on your immediate assistance.

Assessment Questions:

- What is your first response to the passenger?
- How do you manage the situation while balancing your other responsibilities?
- What steps do you take to help locate the lost item?
- How would you communicate with the passenger if the item is not found quickly?

Key Competencies Assessed: Customer Service Orientation, Communication, Prioritization, Empathy.

4. Managing a Medical Emergency

Scenario:

While patrolling the terminal, you notice a passenger who has collapsed and appears to be having a medical emergency.

Assessment Questions:

- What is your immediate response to the situation?
- How would you coordinate with emergency medical services and airport staff?
- How would you manage the crowd that gathers around the incident?
- What would you do if there is a delay in medical help arriving?

Key Competencies Assessed: Crisis Management, Communication, Situational Awareness, Teamwork.

APPENDIX D: BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below is a list of behavioral interview questions tailored for airport security positions, focusing on key competencies like attention to detail, situational awareness, decision making, communication skills, and teamwork:

Attention to Detail

Describe a time when you noticed something out of place or suspicious in a work environment. What steps did you take, and what was the outcome?

Can you provide an example of a situation where your attention to detail helped prevent a potential problem?

Tell me about a time when you had to follow strict procedures. How did you ensure you didn't miss any steps?

Situational Awareness

Describe a situation where you had to assess a potentially dangerous situation quickly. What actions did you take?

Tell me about a time when you had to make a split-second decision due to an unexpected event. How did you handle it, and what was the result?

Give an example of a time when you were able to identify a potential risk before it became a serious issue. How did you address it?

Decision Making

Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision under pressure. What was your thought process, and what was the outcome?

Tell me about a situation where you had to choose between following protocol and taking an alternative approach. How did you decide, and what was the result?

Give an example of when you made a decision that others questioned. How did you handle the situation?

Communication Skills

Describe a situation where you had to communicate complex or sensitive information to someone who might not have understood it easily. How did you ensure they understood?

Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a conflict with a coworker or a member of the public. How did you manage the conversation?

Provide an example of when clear communication was critical to the success of a task. What steps did you take to ensure everyone was on the same page?

Teamwork

Describe a time when you worked as part of a team to achieve a goal. What was your role, and how did you contribute to the team's success?

Tell me about a situation where you had to work with someone whose working style was very different from yours. How did you manage the collaboration?

Give an example of a time when you had to rely on your team to complete a task. How did you ensure the team worked effectively together?

Handling Stressful Situations

Can you provide an example of a time when you were in a high pressure situation at work? How did you maintain your composure and focus?

Describe a time when you had to manage multiple priorities under a tight deadline. How did you prioritize your tasks?

Tell me about a situation where you had to deal with an angry or upset passenger. How did you handle the situation?

Ethics and Integrity

Describe a situation where you witnessed unethical behavior at work. What did you do about it?

Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision that tested your integrity. What was the situation, and how did you handle it?

Adaptability

Describe a time when you had to adapt quickly to a change in your work environment or procedures. How did you handle the transition?

Tell me about a situation where you had to adjust your approach based on new information. How did you manage the change?

Customer Service Orientation

Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond to help a passenger or customer. What did you do, and what was the outcome?

Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult or demanding passenger. How did you ensure a positive experience for them?