

Feds Make 'Desperate Move' to Hire 5K Border Patrol Agents

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The US Border Patrol is having staffing issues, but Customs and Border Protection is hoping a \$297 million deal with a private firm will get everything back on track. The *Los Angeles Times* reports on a government contract with Accenture, which has been tasked with "the full life cycle of the hiring process" for about 5,000 new Border Patrol agents, as well as 2,500 or so other government jobs. That hiring process includes recruiting efforts all the way up to formal job offers. The contract, which can extend for up to five years, will pay out nearly \$43 million in its first year alone, per government records. It's being described as one of President Trump's largest outlay of funds yet for border protection. He signed an executive order shortly after being inaugurated calling for the CBP to up its agent count by 5,000 (it's nearly 2,000 agents short of what it's required to have, per Congress).

Accenture, which will be supplementing the agency's internal hiring processes, beat out four other bidders for the contract, which some aren't so sure makes financial sense. "They're spending almost \$40,000 per hire," says a Cato Institute policy analyst, who says "that seems like a pretty desperate move" and perhaps unnecessary, as illegal immigrant apprehensions are now at an all-time low. In a statement, CBP defends the contract, noting the total amount also includes startup costs for recruiting. It also argues it needs help with hiring, which has taken a hit recently due to "changing generational values, the statewide legalization of marijuana, and a growing distrust of law enforcement," among other reasons.