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TARP Valuation Talent May Be Tough To Snag - By Katy Burne

If the bailout plan gets passed eventually, the government should have little difficulty hiring junior staffers to work on distressed asset acquisitions. But, getting the more senior valuation talent will be tougher, according to one headhunter.

“There are people available, but a lot of them are too junior to accurately value this stuff,” said Gustavo Dolfino, coo of executive search firm WhiteRock Capital in New York. **“The VPs more involved in evaluating [the assets] have been picked up by hedge funds that are paying much more than what the government can pay. Those managers are very expensive, but are worth every dime.”**

The government is tipped to hire outside money managers to manage the securities it buys, which will help make a secondary market for them so that distressed funds bid up their prices and they can eventually be offloaded. A consultancy is also expected to be hired to provide a fairness opinion on what is being paid for the assets. But the job of pricing hard-to-value securities is thought worthy of only a few. **“There are people available, but a lot of them are too junior to accurately value them. The typical associate you could pick up for USD 300,000 could do the number crunching, but they’d need a VP.”**

Staffers for the Troubled Asset Relief Program--as envisaged under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, which failed to pass the House today--**would more likely come from the buy-side, added Dolfino.** He declined to talk specifics about any hires in progress he is aware of, but said he is aware of two.