

U.S. Government Accountability Office



GAO

The Human Capital
STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Years 2004-2006



Accountability ★ Integrity ★ Reliability



A Message from the Comptroller General



GAO exists to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. To accomplish its mission, GAO depends on a diverse and knowledge-based workforce comprising individuals with a broad spectrum of technical and program skills and institutional memory. This workforce represents GAO's human capital—its greatest asset—and is critical to the agency's success in serving the Congress and the nation.

This strategic human capital plan is a key step in continuing GAO's progress to build a highly effective, performance-based organization by attracting, retaining, motivating, and rewarding a high-performing, top-quality workforce. GAO believes that strategic human capital management must be the centerpiece of any serious change management initiative and effort to transform the culture and operations of any large organization, including government agencies. This plan extends and builds upon what GAO has already accomplished by using existing administrative authorities and by pursuing incremental additional tools and flexibilities legislatively. From the demonstrated results that GAO has achieved, it is clear that we have been a leader in human capital or people strategy within the federal government. At the same time, this strategic human capital plan is intended to build on these accomplishments and position GAO for the future. The plan includes a continuing emphasis on the skills, knowledge, and performance of GAO's workforce as the primary factors in connection with GAO's employment and compensation policies. Additionally, achieving a diverse, empowered, and enabled workforce while assuring opportunities for all and preventing discrimination are also important elements in this plan. Importantly, this strategic human capital plan is directly linked to GAO's overall strategic vision of what it wants to accomplish and will serve as a cornerstone in our future change management and agency transformation initiatives.

Since maximizing performance and ensuring accountability are at the heart of GAO's mission, the agency believes that it must lead by example in all major management areas, including human capital. By managing its workforce strategically, integrating its internal strategic and workforce plans, and focusing on results, GAO is helping to improve its performance and enhance accountability. By doing so, GAO also hopes to demonstrate to other federal agencies that they can make similar improvements in the way they manage their people within the context of current law while also helping to identify the kinds of more-comprehensive legislative reforms that should be enacted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. M. Walker". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David M. Walker
Comptroller General
of the United States



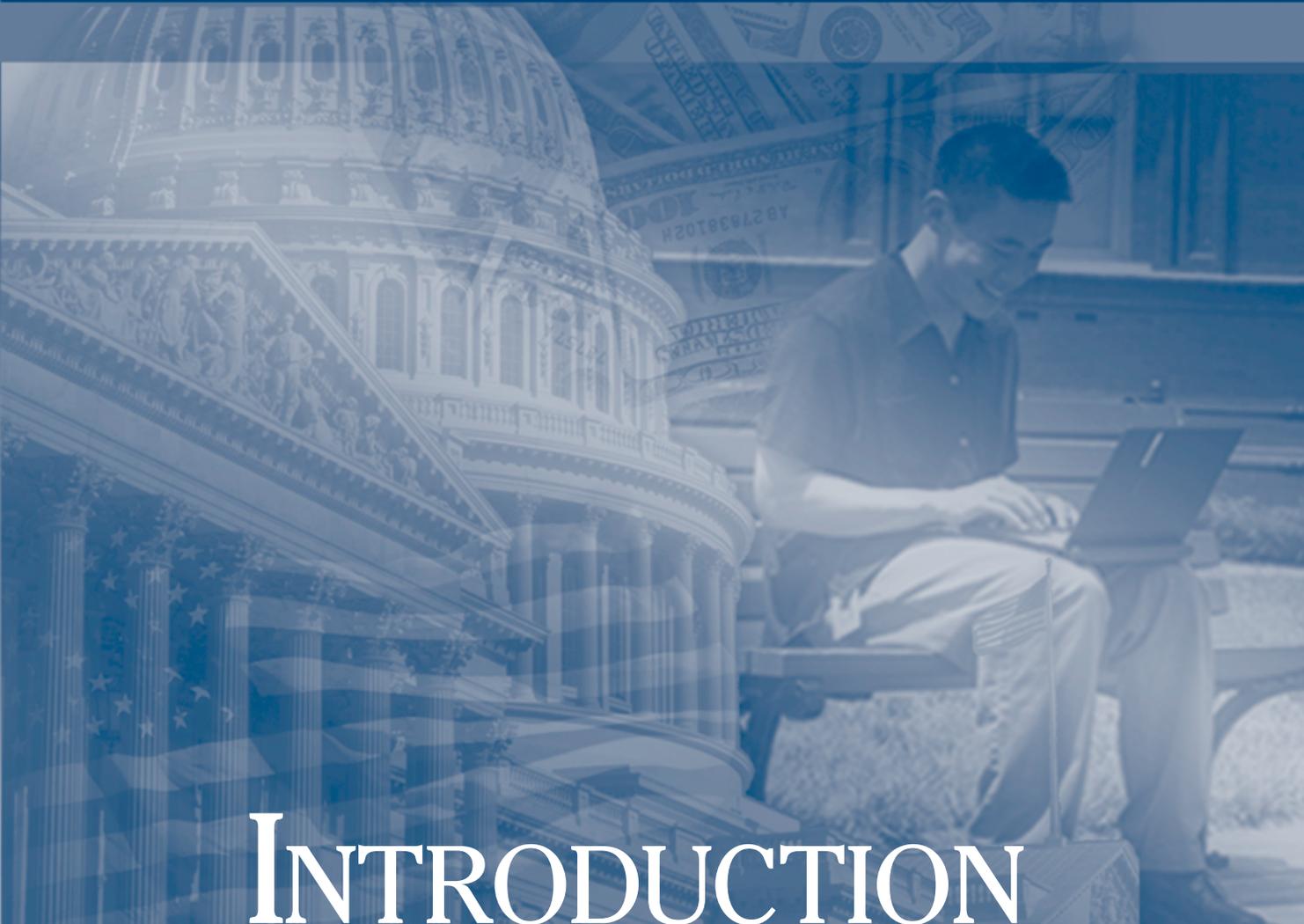
TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	4
GAO Personnel Act of 1980	5
Human Capital Challenges	6
Public Law 106-303	7
GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2004	8
How GAO Will Utilize These New Flexibilities	9
Possible Budgetary Constraints	10
Human Capital Office Transformation	10
The Strategic Environment	13

GAO’s STRATEGIC HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: FOUR HUMAN CAPITAL CORNERSTONES	15
Leadership	16
Strategic Human Capital Planning	18
Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent	20
Creating a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture	24

APPENDIX I—MEASURING GAO’s MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE	27
--	-----------



INTRODUCTION





With approximately 3,300 employees, GAO is a multidisciplinary professional services organization that conducts a wide range of financial and performance audits, program evaluations, management reviews, investigations, and legal services spanning a broad range of government programs and functions. Given GAO’s role as a key provider of information and analyses for the Congress, maintaining the right mix of technical knowledge and subject matter expertise as well as general analytical skills is vital to achieving the agency’s mission. GAO spends about 80 percent of its resources on its people. And yet, like other federal agencies, GAO has faced significant human capital challenges—challenges that if not effectively addressed, could impair the responsiveness and quality of its work for its congressional clients and the American people they represent.

Carrying out GAO’s mission today is a multidisciplinary staff reflecting the diversity of knowledge and competencies needed to deliver a wide array of products and services to support the Congress. GAO’s mission staff hold degrees in a variety of academic disciplines, such as accounting, law, engineering, public administration, economics, and the social and physical sciences. GAO is extremely proud of its employees and the difference that they make for the Congress and the nation. It is fair to say that while they account for about 80 percent of GAO’s costs, they constitute 100 percent of the agency’s intellectual assets.

Unlike many executive branch agencies, which have either recently received or are just requesting new broad-based human capital tools and flexibilities, GAO has had certain human capital tools and flexibilities for over two decades. As a result, to some extent, GAO has been able to develop and implement a human capital management system with a degree of independence that most agencies in the executive branch do not have. For example, GAO is exempted from certain provisions of Title 5, which governs the competitive service, and GAO is not subject to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) oversight.

GAO Employee Facts	
Number of Employees	
Total: 3,300	
75 percent in headquarters	
25 percent in 11 main field offices	
Primary job series	
Analyst	54 percent
IT Specialist	8 percent
Auditor	7 percent
Attorney	4 percent
Economist	2 percent
All others	25 percent
Highest degree	
Master's	50 percent
Bachelor's	28 percent
Doctorate	11 percent
JD/LLB	4 percent
Associate	2 percent
None	5 percent
Academic disciplines^a	
Business Administration	660
Accounting	622
Political Science	538
Public Administration	474
Public Policy Analysis	382
Economics	404
History	253
International Relations	253
All other	3,331

Source: GAO.

Note: Numbers include mission staff and mission-support staff.

^aMany employees have multiple degrees.

GAO Personnel Act of 1980

Until 1980, GAO’s personnel system was indistinguishable from those of executive branch agencies—that is, GAO was subject to the same laws, regulations, and policies as they were. However, with the expansion of GAO’s role in the congressional oversight of federal agencies and programs, concerns grew about the potential for conflicts of interest. Could GAO conduct independent and objective reviews of executive branch agencies such as OPM when these agencies had the authority to review GAO’s internal personnel activities? As a result, GAO worked with the Congress to pass the GAO Personnel Act of 1980, the principal goal of which was to avoid potential conflicts by making GAO’s personnel system more independent of the executive branch. Along with this independence, the act gave GAO greater flexibility in hiring and managing its workforce. Among other things, it granted the Comptroller General authority to



- appoint, promote, and assign employees without regard to Title 5 requirements in these areas;
- set employees' pay without regard to the federal government's classification standards and requirements (e.g., those for General Schedule); and
- establish a merit pay system for appropriate officers and employees.

By excepting the agency from the above requirements, the GAO Personnel Act of 1980 allowed the agency to pursue some significant innovations in managing its people. One key innovation was the establishment of a “broad banding,” or “pay banding,” approach for classifying and paying the agency’s analyst and attorney workforce in 1989. This was coupled with the adoption of a pay-for-performance system for this portion of the workforce. Therefore, while other agencies are only now requesting the authority to establish broad banding and pay-for-performance systems, GAO has had almost 15 years of experience with such systems.

On the basis of analyses and feedback from managers and employees, in an effort aimed at continuous improvement, GAO is currently undertaking a comprehensive classification and compensation review with respect to its broad-banded systems. The overriding objective of this review is to assure that our policies and practices enable GAO to attract, retain, and reward top talent—both now and in the future. This main objective is supported by four key principles: (1) classification and compensation systems should result in equal pay for work of equal value over time, (2) the classification program should be an accurate reflection of what we expect our people to do, (3) classification and compensation systems should be reasonable and competitive, and (4) these same programs should be affordable and sustainable on the basis of current and expected resource levels. In addition to reviewing and updating our existing broad-banding and pay-for-performance systems, work is under way to convert the agency’s mission support (administrative) staff to a broad-banded, pay-for-performance system during the latter part of fiscal year 2004.

Human Capital Challenges

A number of the human capital challenges that GAO has faced were created by the significant reduction in the size of the agency undertaken in the mid-1990s. Specifically, from fiscal year 1992 through fiscal 1997, GAO underwent budgetary cuts totaling 33 percent in constant fiscal 1992 dollars. To achieve those budgetary reductions while meeting other agency needs, GAO reduced the number of its employees 39 percent through extensive field office closings and targeted reductions in headquarters staff. To conform to the reduced budgetary ceiling, GAO then instituted a virtual hiring freeze at the entry level, cut training for all staff, suspended agencywide incentive programs, and at times used mid-level promotions as a retention strategy. Because of the reduction in hiring and the nature of the then-existing reduction-in-force (RIF) rules, the average age of the agency’s workforce increased, and the retirement eligibility of staff accelerated. Analyses showed that by the end of fiscal 2004, about 34 percent of all GAO employees would be eligible to retire. For upper-level staff, the proportion eligible to retire was even larger: 48 percent of all band III management-level employees and 55 percent of all Senior Executive Service members.

Thus, as at many federal agencies, GAO’s human capital profile had come to reflect a workforce that was smaller, older, and increasingly top-heavy. In addition to the succession-related concerns raised



by such a profile, GAO also faced a range of skills gaps. As major policy issues have become more complex and as technology has radically altered the way the federal government conducts business, the types of skills and knowledge needed by GAO staff have been evolving, and the need for sophisticated technical skills has been increasing.

In the late 1990s, GAO's leadership recognized that GAO's human capital profile and selected skills gaps presented serious challenges to GAO's future ability to serve the Congress. The Comptroller General also sought to have GAO become a model federal agency and a world-class professional services organization that focuses on delivering positive results for the Congress and the country. GAO's ability to operate in an efficient, effective, and economical manner and meet the ever-changing and increasingly complex needs of the Congress could be seriously compromised if the agency's human capital challenges were not effectively addressed.

As a first step in addressing these concerns, GAO utilized its internal administrative authority to implement measures to improve the alignment of its human capital with overall strategic goals and objectives as contained in GAO's Strategic Plan. After our first strategic plan was developed in 2000, we used it to restructure our organization to align with the goals and objectives of the plan. GAO's restructuring resulted in the elimination of a layer of management and the consolidation of 35 issue areas into 13 teams, and further reduced our field offices from 16 to 11. These changes have enabled GAO to become less hierarchical, process-oriented, "siloed," and internally focused and more results-oriented, partnerial, client focused, and externally aware. Other major human capital initiatives included an overall human capital self-assessment, the revitalization of the recruiting and college relations programs, a workforce planning process, and the establishment of a professional development program for entry-level analysts. These and subsequent measures improved the "shape" of the agency by decreasing the number of mid-level managers and by increasing the number of entry-level and other staff with the skills and abilities needed to accomplish GAO's work as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: FY 1998 Actual, and FY 2004, 2005, and 2006 Projected

	FY 1998	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
SES/SL	3.9%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%
Analyst band III	12.2%	13.4%	13.2%	13.0%
Analyst band II	45.6%	38.8%	39.4%	40.0%
Analyst band I	13.1%	20.3%	20.1%	19.9%
Attorney & Criminal Investigator	4.2%	4.5%	4.6%	4.6%
Admin. & Professional Support	21.0%	19.0%	18.7%	18.5%

Source: GAO.

Note: Profiles represent staffing at the end of each fiscal year.

Public Law 106-303

In addition to these initiatives, GAO's leadership recognized that additional steps to reshape the agency's workforce were necessary and that preexisting personnel authorities did not allow the agency to address



these challenges effectively. Therefore, GAO sought legislation establishing narrowly tailored flexibilities that would help to reshape its workforce and recruit and retain staff with needed technical skills. On the basis of a sound business case, Pub. L. No. 106-303—known as the GAO Personnel Flexibilities Act (the act)—was enacted in October 2000. The act authorized the Comptroller General to implement the following personnel flexibilities:

- offer voluntary early retirement (“early out”) to realign the workforce to meet budgetary constraints or mission needs; correct skill imbalances; or reduce high-grade, managerial, or supervisory positions;
- offer separation incentive payments to realign the workforce to meet budgetary constraints or mission needs; correct skill imbalances; or reduce high-grade, supervisory, or managerial positions;
- establish modified regulations for the separation of employees during a reduction or other adjustment in force;
- establish senior-level scientific, technical, and professional positions and provide those positions with the same pay and benefits applicable to the Senior Executive Service, while remaining within GAO’s current allocation of super-grade positions; and
- renew 3-year term appointments.

Since the act’s implementation in 2000, GAO found that the loss of higher-level staff through the early out authority, along with the loss of other employees whose skills did not match the agency’s highest priority needs, has helped GAO address succession planning and skill imbalance issues in addition to increasing the numbers of entry-level staff who can be hired. During this period, GAO also used its authority to establish and fill eight senior-level positions, including that of a Chief Accountant, Chief Economist, Chief Statistician, and Chief Actuary. The other flexibilities have not been used to date.

GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2004

The Congress recently passed GAO’s most recent legislative proposal combining diverse initiatives that, collectively, should further GAO’s ability to enhance its performance and ensure its accountability through helping to ensure that it can attract, retain, motivate, and reward a top-quality, high-performing workforce. Some of these provisions give GAO the permanent authority to use certain human capital tools and flexibilities that it has effectively utilized, especially in changing the shape of its workforce. These initiatives should also have the beneficial effect of helping guide other agencies in their human capital transformation efforts. Specifically, the Congress provided the agency with the following additional human capital tools and flexibilities:

- makes permanent GAO’s 3-year authority to offer voluntary early retirement and voluntary separation payments;
- allows the Comptroller General to adjust the pay rates of GAO employees separately from the annual adjustments authorized for executive branch employees;
- permits GAO to set the pay of an employee demoted as a result of workforce restructuring or reclassification at his or her current rate with no automatic annual increase to basic pay until his or her salary is less than the maximum rate for the new position;
- provides authority to reimburse employees for some relocation expenses when that transfer does not meet current legal requirements but still benefits GAO;



- provides 20 days of annual leave for certain employees with less than 3 years of federal service;
- authorizes an executive exchange program with private-sector organizations working in areas of mutual concern where GAO has a supply-demand imbalance; and
- changes GAO's name from the "General Accounting Office" to the "Government Accountability Office."

How GAO Will Utilize These New Flexibilities

GAO will continue to use its early out authority when necessary to realign GAO's workforce in order to meet budgetary demands or mission needs, correct skill imbalances, or reduce high-grade positions. Although GAO has not yet used its buyout authority and has no plans to do so in the foreseeable future, the agency sought to retain this flexibility to maximize the options available to the agency to deal with future circumstances, which cannot be reasonably anticipated at this time.

The pay flexibilities in the GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2004 (HC II) will give GAO the flexibility to make changes in the manner in which it annually adjusts the basic pay rates of employees and allows greater discretion in determining the annual across-the-board and locality pay increases for our employees. GAO has the discretion to set annual pay increases by taking into account alternative methodologies from those used by the executive branch and various other factors, such as extraordinary economic conditions or serious budgetary constraints. GAO is no longer required to provide automatic pay increases to employees who are rated as performing at a below satisfactory level. When the legislation is fully implemented, GAO will be able to allocate more of the funding historically allocated for automatic across-the-board pay adjustments to permanent base pay adjustments that would vary on the basis of performance. In addition, this flexibility affects all GAO non-wage-grade employees, including the SES and Senior Level staff.

Ultimately, all GAO employees who perform at a satisfactory level will receive an annual base pay adjustment composed of purchase power protection and locality-based pay considerations absent extraordinary economic circumstances or severe budgetary constraints. GAO will develop and apply its own methodology for annual cost-of-living and locality pay adjustments. For example, pay ranges in Washington, D.C., and in other cities in which GAO employees reside, will be based on the results of an independent compensation study conducted for GAO that will be tailored to the nature, skills, and composition of GAO's workforce. The performance part of an employee's annual raise will depend on the level of the employee's performance and that employee's pay band. It is estimated that a vast majority of the workforce will qualify for an additional performance-based increase. However, under this provision, employees who perform below a satisfactory level will not receive an annual increase of either type. In addition, all compensation actions will be informed by the pending compensation study.

GAO now has the authority, in appropriate circumstances, to reimburse employees for some relocation expenses when transfers do not meet current legal requirements for entitlement to reimbursement but still benefit GAO. Under current law, employees who qualify for relocation benefits are entitled to full benefits; however, employees whose transfer may be of some benefit or value to the agency would not be eligible to receive any reimbursement. This provision would provide these employees some relief from the high cost of relocating while at the same time allowing GAO the flexibility to promulgate regulations in order to provide such relief. GAO now also has the authority to provide 160 hours (20



leave to appropriate employees in certain positions who have less than 3 years of federal service. This is a necessary flexibility to aid in the recruitment and retention of highly skilled employees with little or no previous federal service. The authority to set the pay of an employee demoted as a result of workforce restructuring or reclassification at his or her current rate with no automatic annual increase to basic pay until the salary is less than the maximum rate for the new position will further the principle of equal pay for work of equal value over time.

The Comptroller General may now create an executive exchange program between GAO and the private sector. In skill areas where GAO has a supply-demand imbalance, judicious use of such a program will promote a healthy exchange of ideas, methods, and practices, which should prove beneficial to all concerned. Changing the name of the agency to the Government Accountability Office is intended to more accurately reflect the modern audit and evaluation entity GAO has become. At the same time, the well-known acronym “GAO,” which has over 80 years of history behind it, will be maintained.

Possible Budgetary Constraints

Given large current budget deficits and the nation’s long-range fiscal imbalance, the Congress is likely to place increasing emphasis on fiscal restraint beginning in fiscal year 2005. While it is unclear as to how GAO will ultimately be affected, it is reasonable to assume that any attempt to exercise additional budgetary discipline will include GAO and other federal agencies. GAO must plan and prepare for the possibility of significant and recurring constraints on the resources made available to the agency. Since over 80 percent of our budget is composed of people-related costs, any serious budget situation will have an impact on our human capital policies and practices. This, in turn, will have an impact on our ability to accomplish our mission and meet our performance targets. Using our recent human capital flexibility as a framework, GAO would consider such options as conducting one or more early out offers, reviewing our policies and approaches to total compensation, delaying or reducing investments in discretionary programs that support the workforce, rethinking our current approach to hiring, and considering workforce restructuring actions on the basis of organizational need and budgetary considerations.

Human Capital Office Transformation

GAO’s Human Capital Office (HCO) has taken a number of steps to transform itself from a support function involved primarily in managing personnel processes to one that has the data and analytical tools necessary to assess GAO’s workforce requirements, manage risk, and provide managers with the human capital services they require to attain GAO’s strategic goals and objectives.

The agency has identified between 15 and 20 workforce performance indicators to track on a dashboard for comprehensive data reporting and benchmarking. Metrics are represented in a balanced scorecard for HCO. Senior GAO managers will have online access to unit-specific data such as attrition rates, offer acceptance rates, and new hire performance data.

For the first time, agency staff were surveyed on their satisfaction with the human capital information and services they receive. HCO is using the survey results to formulate a service improvement action plan, focusing on those services most important to GAO staff. Improvement efforts will be tracked through the office’s balanced scorecard and publicized throughout the agency. Follow-up surveys will be conducted on an annual basis.



GAO is also looking internally at the organizational structure and skill base of HCO to identify changes necessary to become a more consultative, decision support organization. A number of our internal human capital processes have been reengineered to improve the timeliness of delivering services to GAO employees. For example, the number of calendar days to print and distribute personnel action notification forms (SF-50s) to staff decreased by an average of 80 percent.

Over the last several years, GAO has undertaken a wide array of initiatives to improve its human capital strategies. Table 1 highlights a few of GAO's recent activities and accomplishments designed to address its human capital challenges. (See p. 12.)



Table 1: Selected GAO Human Capital Administrative Actions

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated self-assessment of GAO's human capital profile to better understand the distribution of GAO's workforce by pay level, attrition rates, retirement eligibility rates, projected retirements, and ratios of managers to employees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constructed and analyzed a detailed workforce planning model to ensure that GAO hired, retained, and contracted for the appropriate number of staff with the needed competencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed certain "people measures" as part of GAO's balanced scorecard to assess GAO's performance in human capital management, including measures for attracting and retaining staff, staff utilization and development, and organizational leadership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensified recruiting efforts targeted at the entry level through aggressive college outreach and a streamlined application and hiring process using Web-based systems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented a new competency-based performance management system for analysts and specialist staff that links individual employee performance to the accomplishment of GAO's strategic goals and objectives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted annual employee feedback surveys to understand the status and progress of the agency's improvement efforts and employee satisfaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided student loan repayment program of up to \$6,000 per year for employees willing to commit to remaining with GAO at least 3 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted biannual knowledge and skills inventory survey (KSIS) using a Web-based tool to capture information about the knowledge and skills of the workforce for use in workforce planning and engagement staffing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieved an elected Employee Advisory Council to facilitate open communication and direct input from line employees to the Comptroller General and other senior leaders on a wide range of agency policies and programs including items such as workforce restructuring, performance-based pay, and the employee preference survey.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted biannual employee preference surveys that give employees the opportunity to be considered for reassignment to enrich their skills and better accommodate personal interests while simultaneously meeting organizational needs and priorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented early out authority to meet budgetary constraints, correct skills imbalances, and help reduce the number of high-grade managerial and supervisory positions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revitalized analysts' learning and development curriculum to address gaps in GAO's capacity for supporting analysts' core skills development and undertaking the executive candidate development program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established the Office of Opportunity and Inclusiveness to oversee GAO's efforts to foster a work environment that is inclusive, fair, and unbiased and values opportunity and diversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented additional family-friendly benefits such as business casual dress and public transportation subsidies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed an agency organizational realignment, including eliminating a layer of management, reducing the number of organizational units, and closing 5 of 16 field offices, to enhance GAO's ability to achieve strategic goals and objectives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established career transition services to provide confidential career transition services such as career assessment and planning, job search assistance, résumé and cover letter writing, and interviewing techniques.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established a professional development program (PDP) to help with the transition of, maximize the productivity of, enhance the job satisfaction of, and encourage the retention of newly hired, entry-level staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed knowledge transfer/retention program to transfer institutional and individual knowledge, as well as train and mentor less experienced employees until they are ready to assume higher-level duties, by reemploying selected retiring employees with key skills and knowledge for a temporary period without reducing their salary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented an employee suggestion program that awards employees for suggestions on ways to improve GAO's performance and accountability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued GAO's Executive Candidate Assessment and Development Program to identify individuals at the GS-15/Band III level with potential to take on executive-level responsibilities and provide them with training to enhance their leadership skills.

Source: GAO



The Strategic Environment

GAO periodically scans the environment to identify current and emerging worldwide, national, and regional trends that have implications for the federal government and GAO's strategic priorities. A fuller understanding of the strategic environment that informed the development of this human capital strategy can be gained by accessing GAO's updated Strategic Plan for 2004-2006 on the agency's Web site at www.gao.gov. Some of the trends that are particularly significant in the context of strategic human capital management include the following:

National Environment

- The national and global response to terrorism and other threats to personal and national security.
- The increasing interdependence of enterprises, economies, civil society, and national governments, referred to as "globalization."
- The shift to market-oriented, knowledge-based economies.
- An aging and more diverse U.S. population.
- Advances in science and technology and the opportunities and challenges created by these changes.
- Challenges and opportunities to maintain and improve the quality of life for the nation, communities, families, and individuals.
- The increasingly diverse nature of governance structures and tools.
- Significant current and projected budget deficits.

Federal Environment

As part of its transformation efforts, the federal government needs to create a culture that moves from

- process to results,
- "stovepipes" to matrixes,
- hierarchical and vertical to flatter and more horizontal structures,
- an inward focus to an external (citizen, customer, and stakeholder) focus,
- micromanagement to employee empowerment,
- reactive behavior to proactive approaches,
- avoiding new technologies to embracing and leveraging them,
- hoarding knowledge to sharing knowledge,
- avoiding risk to managing risk, and
- protecting "turf" to forming partnerships.

GAO

- GAO has a commitment to lead by example and to be in the vanguard of the federal government's overall transformation efforts, including those in the critically important human capital area.
- GAO recognizes that its people are its most valuable asset.



- By managing its workforce strategically and focusing on achieving positive and measurable results, GAO is helping to maximize its own performance and ensure its own accountability.
- In light of achieving organizational results, GAO will continue to strengthen the link between individual performance and pay/recognition.
- GAO will revise its comprehensive training and development program to better target the competencies identified for its analyst workforce.
- GAO will continue to identify, make use of, and share a wide variety of tools and flexibilities to strengthen its human capital programs.
- GAO will continue to make efforts to improve its human capital management program in the following four overarching areas:
 - *Leadership.*
 - *Strategic Human Capital Planning.*
 - *Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent.*
 - *Creating a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture.*



Leadership



Strategic Human
Capital Planning



Acquiring, Developing,
and Retaining Talent



Creating a Results-Oriented
Organizational Culture

GAO's STRATEGIC HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: FOUR HUMAN CAPITAL CORNERSTONES

Leadership



Top leadership must provide the committed, consistent, and inspired attention needed to address human capital and related organizational transformation issues. An effective organization includes a senior leadership team committed to developing more-effective ways of doing business, accomplishing results, and investing in human capital. Perhaps the most important element of successful management reform is the demonstrated commitment of top leaders to change. The Comptroller General and GAO's top management team have clearly and consistently demonstrated their commitment to GAO's human capital transformation efforts.

To address current and emerging human capital challenges, GAO will continue to identify and implement targeted human capital flexibilities and reforms while assuring that adequate safeguards are incorporated to prevent abuse. For these flexibilities and reforms to be effective, GAO will obtain stakeholders' input to establish clear, well-documented, and transparent policies and procedures and will help ensure employees' input, understanding, and acceptance by communicating information on design implementation and the use of the flexibilities to all staff.

GAO's October 2000 human capital legislation gave the agency additional tools to realign its workforce in light of mission needs and overall budgetary constraints; to correct skills imbalances; and to reduce high-grade, managerial, or supervisory positions without reducing the overall number of GAO employees. This legislation allowed the agency to (1) create a technical and scientific career track at a compensation level comparable to that of the SES and (2) give greater consideration to performance and employee skills and knowledge in any RIF actions.

GAO has recently been granted additional human capital flexibility legislation to enable the agency to better manage its people. These flexibilities will, among other things, facilitate GAO's continuing efforts to recruit and retain top talent, develop a more-performance-based compensation system, help realign its workforce, and facilitate its succession planning and knowledge transfer efforts.

To ensure that GAO has the workforce needed to accomplish its work for the Congress, the agency must have policies and practices in place that attract, retain, motivate, and reward top-quality staff. The following two key efforts focus on the implementation and evaluation of existing and potential human capital flexibilities. By undertaking these key efforts and related initiatives, GAO will enhance organizational performance by having a high-performing and skilled workforce in place to achieve GAO's strategic goals and objectives now and in the future.

Key Efforts

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 1: Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of human capital flexibilities granted by Congress to assist GAO in managing our workforce		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GAO's human capital flexibilities address known challenges of attracting, retaining, motivating, and rewarding a high-performing and skilled workforce. • Adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that employees are treated consistently and fairly and that managers are held accountable. • Managers and employees are familiar with GAO's human capital flexibilities and use them effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented policies, procedures, and evaluation plan are available to all employees. • Extent to which program objectives are met by implemented flexibilities. • Employee feedback data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop clear, documented, and transparent policies and procedures to implement approved flexibilities. (FY 2004-2006.) • Educate managers and employees on the availability and appropriate use of approved flexibilities through new or ongoing communication mechanisms and management-training initiatives. (FY 2004-2006). • Develop and implement a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of approved flexibilities. (FY 2005-2006).
Key Effort 2: Continuously assess GAO's need for additional workforce flexibilities to enhance organizational human capital management and seek changes where appropriate		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case requesting additional and/or modified workforce flexibilities linked to the accomplishment of organizational goals presented to Congress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of emerging workforce challenges completed. • Additional and/or refined workforce flexibilities identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine need for seeking additional flexibilities through ongoing analysis of emerging workforce challenges and evaluation results examining the effectiveness of implemented flexibilities. (Ongoing)

Strategic Human Capital Planning



Effective organizations integrate human capital approaches as strategies for accomplishing their mission and defined programmatic goals and desired outcomes. The effectiveness of this integration is judged by how well it helps achieve organizational goals. Furthermore, high-performing organizations stay alert to emerging mission demands and human capital challenges and remain open to reevaluating their human capital practices in light of their demonstrated successes or failures in achieving their strategic objectives.

The extent to which human capital approaches support the accomplishment of programmatic goals can be evaluated through the use of workforce planning. Workforce planning efforts, including succession planning linked to strategic goals and objectives, can enable an agency to remain aware of and be prepared for its current and future needs as an organization, such as the size of the workforce; its deployment across the organization; and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the agency to pursue its mission.

To ensure that GAO more fully integrates its human capital policies, systems, and strategies for accomplishing its strategic objectives, the agency will continue to monitor and evaluate emerging mission demands and related human capital challenges through an annual workforce planning process. The workforce planning process will ensure that GAO hires, retains, or contracts for the appropriate number of staff with the competencies needed to achieve the agency's mission.

This planning will entail the collection of valid and reliable data on such indicators as the distribution of employee skills and competencies, attrition rates, and projected retirement rates and retirement eligibility by occupation and organizational unit. In addition to the following key efforts and supporting initiatives, GAO will use its organizationwide knowledge and skills inventory to identify current problems in its workforce and plan for future improvements.

Key Efforts

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 3: Enhance GAO's strategic human capital planning efforts to more fully integrate them with the agency's strategic goals and objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved human capital planning process that enhances the ability to evaluate GAO's performance against established goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size, shape, and competencies of the workforce meet targets necessary to achieve organizational goals. Each human capital initiative has a clearly defined goal. GAO units have the opportunity to provide input to the human capital strategic planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate ongoing strategic human capital planning in support of annual updates to GAO's strategic plan. (Ongoing) Ensure that each human capital initiative has clearly defined goals and objectives that are linked to goals and objectives in GAO's strategic plan. (Ongoing)
Key Effort 4: Use workforce planning to more closely align GAO's human capital assets with organizational needs and goals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued alignment of human capital resources with GAO's strategic goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAO's target work force is defined in terms of size, shape, and competencies needed to accomplish organizational goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align process for annual workforce planning and staffing needs assessment with goals outlined in GAO's strategic plan. (Ongoing) Integrate succession planning into overall workforce planning efforts. (FY 2005)

Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent



GAO is committed to continuously improving recruiting, hiring, professional development, and retention strategies to ensure that it has the needed talent to accomplish its mission. Organizations that effectively embrace the principles of modern human capital management realize that as the value of their people increases, so does their performance capacity. They also realize that investing in and enhancing the value of employees is a win-win goal for employers and employees alike.

Strategies for investing in human capital need to be fully integrated with needs identified through the strategic planning process and the annual workforce planning process. The goals and expectations for these investments need to be transparent, clearly defined, and well documented, and their rationale must be consistent across the range of human capital programs. The efficiency of the investments needs to be continuously monitored, and the effectiveness should be periodically evaluated and reported.

In order to be a model organization, GAO is building and will maintain a diverse work environment that is conducive to performance excellence; encourages full participation by the workforce; and supports personal, professional, and organizational growth. GAO wants to be regarded as an employer of choice—one that recruits, develops, retains, and rewards high-quality employees and is considered one of America's best places to work. The following key efforts and supporting initiatives are designed to ensure success in this endeavor:

Key Efforts—Attracting and Retaining a High-Quality Workforce

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 5: Examine state-of-the-art recruiting programs, identify best practices, and plan implementation of recommended actions to enhance GAO's hiring program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued ability to recruit, hire, and retain a highly skilled, diverse, and capable workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attrition and retention data. New hire survey data. Exit survey data (for interns and permanent hires). Employee feedback survey data. Candidate and new hire quality data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance GAO's hiring program by working with organizational units to develop strategies for identifying and acquiring staff with needed skills and competencies. Review the effectiveness of GAO's strategy to recruit, hire, and retain a broad spectrum of candidates for employment and recommend changes as appropriate. (Ongoing) Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of student loan repayment program designed to recruit and retain highly qualified employees with critical knowledge and skills. (FY 2004-2005) Use new flexibilities to remove barriers to addressing hard-to-fill hiring needs (e.g., additional leave for upper-level hires, private-sector exchange program, and reimbursement for relocation expenses. (FY 2005)
Key Effort 6: Identify and implement human capital sourcing strategies for addressing workforce gaps not to be met by hiring		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce gaps filled by a competent and cost-effective workforce solution other than hiring. Improved transfer of knowledge among GAO employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return on investment analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study sourcing strategy options, including contracting out and the use of consultants, and make recommendations as appropriate. (FY 2005-2006) Continue implementing and evaluating GAO's knowledge retention (phased retirement) program. (Ongoing) Continue implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of new flexibilities that allow GAO to establish senior-level positions to meet critical scientific, technical, and professional needs. (Ongoing)

Key Efforts—Developing the Skills and Competencies of GAO’s Workforce

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 7: Identify methods to improve staff development and utilization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced utilization and development of GAO staff, including entry-level analysts. Increased ability to attract, retain, motivate, and reward a highly skilled, diverse, and capable workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee satisfaction data on staff utilization. Percentage of staff working on matrix assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and implement changes to the processes used to staff audit and evaluation engagements, including multitasking and matrix assignments. (FY 2004-2006) Enhance and modify the professional development program (PDP) in response to GAO's and new hires' changing needs. (FY 2005) Track and assess assignment and training opportunities given to individuals to assure that all staff are given the opportunity to maximize their performance and make recommendations as appropriate. (FY 2005)
Key Effort 8: Design and deliver a training and development program that focuses on GAO's core competencies and creates a unified learning architecture		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved training and development program that prepares staff to achieve GAO's strategic goals. GAO will better leverage learning dollars by creating capability for desktop learning. GAO's learning expenditures will be better aligned with overall organizational strategy and performance goals. Supervisors are better prepared to create and sustain a productive work environment and to assume responsibility for developing staff. Save time and improve productivity, as more employees master practical applications of technology to carry out assigned tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees are able to search current curricula by competency, grade level, topic, job title, role, and delivery mode. 25% of existing curricula content will be converted to allow Web-based access. GAO can calculate the total cost of learning and prioritize spending to support specific competency goals. Every supervisor and manager has timely access to leadership support training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate coherent, unified, role-based curricula that support development of the competencies identified in GAO's performance management system. (FY 2004) Provide GAO employees with "one-stop shopping" Web-based access to information on learning resources, enterprisewide. (FY 2004) Create a learning board as a means to develop organizationwide consensus on learning needs and prioritize learning investments. (FY 2004) Design, develop, and deliver integrated leadership and management curricula that support GAO's values and carry out mission goals. (FY 2005) Develop integrated technology curricula on working smarter (i.e., more productively) via available tools. (FY 2005)

Key Efforts—Developing the Skills and Competencies of GAO’s Workforce

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 9: Knowledge-sharing and knowledge-transfer strategy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalized processes for capturing, maintaining, and sharing institutional knowledge. • Improved sharing of relevant information with all GAO employees. • Capitalize on the intellectual assets of GAO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees have timely access to clearly identified information repositories, reference services, and staff expertise. • Employee feedback data on employee's awareness of knowledge collections and knowledge-sharing initiatives. • Employee feedback data on whether GAO's workforce competencies meet targets necessary to achieve organizational goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and explore strategies for enhancing organizational knowledge sharing and knowledge-transfer. (Ongoing) • Develop communications strategies for identifying and sharing information across GAO. (Ongoing) • Incorporate subject matter expertise review as an active and visible part of GAO's annual needs assessment process for workforce planning and staffing. (Ongoing)

Creating a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture



GAO is committed to creating an organizational culture that promotes high performance, ensures accountability, and empowers and includes employees in setting and accomplishing programmatic goals. As in many cases in the human capital area, *how* an organization does something is as important as *what* it does. The involvement of employees both directly and through employee organizations is crucial to success. Involving employees in the planning process helps to develop agency goals and objectives that incorporate insight about operations from a front-line perspective.

Organizations that promote and achieve a diverse workplace can attract and retain high-quality employees and increase client and customer loyalty. In an effort to foster an environment that is responsive to the needs of diverse groups of employees, these organizations create a work environment that maximizes all employees' ability to fully contribute to the organization's mission. They also identify opportunities for resolving disputes fairly and efficiently and create a workplace free of discrimination.

GAO is also seeking to shift the orientation of individual performance expectations and accountability systems from an adherence to process and the completion of activities to a greater focus on individual contributions to organizational results. One way to embed a results orientation is to align individual employee performance expectations with agency goals so that individuals understand the connection between their daily activities and their organization's success.

To build a culture that promotes high performance and ensures accountability, GAO will continue involving employees in defining and accomplishing organizational goals and refining its compensation and performance management systems to more closely link rewards and recognition to employees' knowledge, skills, and contributions to organizational results. By involving employees directly and through GAO's Employee Advisory Council, the agency hopes to increase employees' understanding and acceptance of organizational goals and objectives and improve overall motivation and morale. GAO's ongoing commitment to fostering a workforce that is inclusive and draws on the strengths of employees at all levels and of all backgrounds will also contribute directly to mission accomplishment. GAO's efforts in all these areas are reflected in the following key efforts and initiatives:

Key Efforts

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
Key Effort 10: Promote an environment that is fair and unbiased, and values opportunity and inclusiveness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced work environment that recognizes and appreciates diversity and is free of bias. Improved family-friendly policies that help staff balance work and family lives. A more productive workforce. Enhanced ability to attract, retain, motivate, and reward a highly skilled, diverse, and capable staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee feedback data on satisfaction with work environment and family-friendly programs. Percentage of employees who concur that GAO's work environment is fair and unbiased. Employee feedback data on satisfaction with communications from senior leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and recommend changes to GAO's human capital policies and practices to ensure that they are fair and unbiased and promote workplace excellence. (Ongoing) Identify artificial barriers that deter GAO employees from realizing their full potential and work with management officials to eliminate such barriers. (Ongoing) Improve GAO's tools and measures to assess GAO employee feedback. (Ongoing) Enhance senior leadership communications with GAO workforce (e.g., CG chat, etc.). (Ongoing) Enhance GAO's offerings of family-friendly and work life programs. (Ongoing) Undertake Tiny Findings Child Care facility expansion study. (FY 2004-2005)
Key Effort 11: Establish competency-based appraisal systems for all staff and make enhancements to these systems as needed		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced appraisal systems that are perceived as fair and unbiased, and promote workplace excellence. Better alignment of individual employees' performance to GAO's strategic plan and core values. Workforce has candid and constructive information designed to maximize their individual potential and contributions to the agency. Management has the information needed to recognize and reward top performers and deal with poor performers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee feedback data on satisfaction with the competency-based appraisal system. Evaluation of selected components of analyst/specialist competency-based appraisal system. Appraisal data analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement competency-based appraisal system for Administrative, Professional, and Support Staff (APSS). Monitor and recommend changes to the competency-based appraisal systems.

Key Efforts

Expected Outcomes	Measures	Initiatives
<p>Key Effort 12: Establish performance-based compensation systems for all staff, and make enhancements to these systems as needed</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation systems that are directly linked to performance and results. • Productive employees who are fairly compensated for their work. • Enhanced performance-based compensation systems that are perceived as fair and unbiased, and promote workplace excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee feedback data on satisfaction with performance-based compensation system. • Employee compensation data. • Assessment of GAO salaries versus market salaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement broad banding for APSS and investigators. (FY 2004) • Develop and implement performance-based compensation system for APSS. (FY 2005) • Monitor and recommend changes to performance-based compensation systems. (Ongoing) • Conduct a market-based salary analysis to identify options for making changes to GAO's compensation system. (FY 2004-2005) • Implement a new annual pay adjustment system that places greater emphasis on performance, while, at a minimum, protecting the purchasing power of employees who are performing at the "meets expectations" level. (FY 2005) • Implement changes to GAO's awards and recognition programs on the basis of results of internal analysis and benchmarking the private and public sectors' best practices awards programs. (FY 2005)



APPENDIX I—MEASURING GAO'S MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE



Appendix I—Measuring GAO’s Management of People

The following are excerpts from *GAO’s Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2005* focusing on our human capital performance measures. This plan and related GAO publications are available free of charge through our Web site at www.gao.gov/sp/sp.html.

Preliminary Performance Measures Related to People

As our most important asset, our people determine our capacity to perform. Therefore, beginning with fiscal year 2005, we are adding performance measures that will help us determine how well we are acquiring, maintaining, and maximizing our human resources. Table 2 describes the measures that we are using to assess our performance in this area. Each year, we will set an agencywide target for each of these measures. The information needed for these measures will come from a variety of sources, including the Department of Agriculture’s National Finance Center database—which handles payroll and personnel data for GAO and other agencies—and our annual confidential survey of employees.

Table 2: Preliminary Measures Related to Our People

Measure	Description
New hire rate	The ratio of the number of people hired to the number we planned to hire.
Acceptance rate	The ratio of the number of applicants accepting offers to the number of offers made.
Retention rate ^a	The ratio of the number of people who did not leave GAO during the fiscal year to the average number of people on board during the year.
Staff development	From the annual employee survey, the percentage of people responding favorably to questions on internal, external, and on-the-job training.
Staff utilization	From the annual employee survey, the percentage of people responding favorably to questions on our use of staff’s knowledge and skills.
Leadership	From the annual employee survey, the percentage of people responding favorably to questions about specific qualities of our managers, such as whether leaders treated staff fairly, made timely decisions, demonstrated GAO’s core values, implemented change effectively, and dealt effectively with diversity issues.
Organizational climate	From the annual employee survey, the percentage of people responding favorably to questions on teamwork, morale, and overall satisfaction.

Source: GAO.

^aRetention rate reflects all attrition, including retirement by approximately 5 percent of the workforce annually.

Appendix I—Measuring GAO’s Management of People

Agencywide Performance Related to Our People

Table 3 reflects our agencywide performance during the last 2 fiscal years for our people measures, along with the agencywide targets for fiscal year 2005.

Table 3: Agencywide Annual Performance Results and Targets

Performance measure	Actual		Target	
	2002	2003	2004	2005
New hire rate	96%	98%	N/A	97%
Acceptance rate	81%	72%	N/A	75%
Retention rate	91%	92%	N/A	90%
Staff development	71%	72%	N/A	70%
Staff utilization	67%	71%	N/A	70%
Leadership	75%	78%	N/A	75%
Organizational climate	67%	71%	N/A	70%

Source: GAO.

Note: N/A indicates that the data are not available.

Appendix I—Measuring GAO’s Management of People

Verification and Validation of Performance Data

To assess our performance in fiscal year 2005, we plan to use performance data that are complete and actual (rather than projected) for all of our performance measures. We expect the data to be reliable because we will follow the verification and validation procedures described here to ensure the data’s quality.

The specific sources of the data for our qualitative performance goals, procedures for independently verifying and validating these data, and the limitations of these data are described in table 4.

Table 4: How We Ensure Data Quality for Performance Measure Related to People

New hire rate	
Background and context	Annually, we develop a workforce plan that takes into account projected workload changes, as well as other changes such as retirements, other attrition, promotions, and skill gaps. The workforce plan for the upcoming year specifies the number of planned hires and, for each hire, specifies the skill type and the level. The plan is conveyed to each of our units to guide hiring throughout the year. Progress toward achieving the workforce plan is monitored continuously by the Chief Administrative Officer. Adjustments to the workforce plan are made throughout the year, if necessary, to reflect changing needs and conditions.
Data sources	The workforce plan is developed and maintained by the Chief Administrative Officer. Data on accessions—that is, new hires coming on board—is taken from the Department of Agriculture’s National Finance Center database, which handles payroll and personnel data for GAO and other agencies.
Verification and validation	The Human Capital Office continuously monitors and reviews accessions and attritions against the contents of the National Finance Center’s database. They follow up on any discrepancies. In addition, on a periodic basis, the IG independently examines our process for calculating the new hire rate. For example, the IG plans to examine this process during fiscal year 2004.
Data limitations	There is a lag of one to two pay periods (up to 4 weeks) before the National Finance Center’s database reflects actual data. We generally allow sufficient time before requesting data for this measure to ensure that we get accurate results.
Acceptance rate	
Background and context	Acceptance rate is a proxy for GAO’s attractiveness as an employer and an indicator of our competitiveness in bringing in new talent.
Data sources	The information required is the number of formal, written job offers made (excluding interns), the number of offers declined, and the number of individuals who come on board. Our Chief Administrative Officers’ staff maintain a database that contains the job offers made and accepted or declined. The Department of Agriculture’s National Finance Center maintains the database containing the data on the number of individuals who come on board.

Appendix I—Measuring GAO’s Management of People

Acceptance rate	
Verification and validation	Human Capital Managers and the Human Capital Office work with the Chief Administrative Officer to assure that each formal, written job offer made and its outcome (declination or acceptance) are noted in the database that is maintained by the Chief Administrative Officer’s staff; periodic checking is performed to review the accuracy of the database. In addition, on a periodic basis, the IG independently examines our process for calculating the acceptance rate. For example, the IG plans to examine this process during fiscal year 2004.
Data limitations	None.
Staff development, staff utilization, leadership, and organizational climate	
Background and context	We strive to continuously improve our organization and our people in order to ensure that we remain a world-class professional services organization. One way that we measure how well we are doing and identify areas for improvement is through our annual employee feedback survey. This Web-based survey, which is conducted by an outside contractor, is administered to all of our employees once a year. Through the survey, we encourage our staff to indicate what they think about GAO’s overall operations, work environment, and organizational culture and how they rate our managers—from the immediate supervisor to the executive committee—on key aspects of their leadership styles. The survey consists of over 100 statements to which staff are asked to indicate a response on a 5-point scale. Several questions address issues relating to staff development, staff utilization, leadership, and organizational climate.
Data sources	These data come from our staff’s responses to an annual Web-based survey. The survey includes 21 questions that are rolled up into the measures of staff development (3 questions), staff utilization (3 questions), leadership (10 questions), and organizational climate (5 questions). From the staff who expressed an opinion, we calculate the percentage of staff selecting the two categories that indicate satisfaction with or a favorable response to the statement. For example, to measure organizational climate, we looked at the responses to five statements: I am treated fairly and with respect in my work unit; overall, I am satisfied with my job at GAO; sufficient effort is made in my work unit to get the opinions and thinking of people who work here; a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit; and my morale is good. For each question, we calculated the percentage of respondents that indicated they generally agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. We then averaged the 5 percentages to obtain the composite percentage by which we measure satisfaction with our organizational climate.
Verification and validation	The employee feedback survey gathers staff opinions on a variety of topics. The survey is password protected, and only the outside contractor has access to passwords. In addition, when the survey instrument was developed, extensive focus groups and pretests were undertaken to refine the questions and provide definitions as needed. We have historically achieved a high response rate (over 85%) to the survey, which indicates that its results are largely representative of the GAO population. In addition, many teams and work units conduct follow-on work to gain a better understanding of the information from the survey. In addition, on a periodic basis, the IG independently examines our process for calculating the percentages for staff development, staff utilization, leadership, and organizational climate. For example, the IG plans to examine this process during fiscal year 2004.
Data limitations	The information contained in the survey is self-contained and, therefore, there is no information to validate the views expressed by staff. We do not plan any actions to remedy this limitation because we feel it would violate the pledge of confidentiality that we make to our staff regarding the survey responses.

Source: GAO.

Photos

Front Cover

GAO staff

Source: GAO.

U.S. Flag

Source: Photo Disc.

Inside Front Cover

U.S. Capitol Rotunda

Source: Corbis.

Message from the Comptroller General

David M. Walker

Source: GAO.

Page 2

U.S. Capitol

Source: GAO.

Page 4

Photo and GAO staff

Source: GAO.

Page 15

Leadership (pp. 15 and 16)

Source: Corbis.

Strategic Human Capital Planning (pp. 15 and 18)

Source: Comstock.

Acquiring, Developing, and Retaining Talent (pp. 15 and 20)

Source: Photo Disc.

Creating a Results-Oriented Organizational Culture (pp. 15 and 24)

Source: Photo Disc.

Inside Back Cover

U.S. Flag and Capitol

Source: GAO.

Back Cover

U.S. Capitol

Source: GAO.

GAO Logo

Source: GAO.

U.S. Flag

Source: Photo Disc.



Accountability ★ Integrity ★ Reliability

Serving the Congress and the Nation



U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20548
GAO-04-1063SP

