

Why GAO Did This Study

As of June 2012, DOD reported a full-time civilian workforce of about 780,000 personnel. According to DOD, about 30 percent of its civilian workforce and 60 percent of its civilian senior leaders will be eligible to retire by March 31, 2015. Such potential loss may result in significant skill gaps. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 requires GAO to submit a report on DOD's 2010-2018 strategic civilian workforce plan. In response, GAO determined the extent to which DOD identified critical skills, competencies, and gaps; assessed its workforce mix; and measured progress in implementing its strategic workforce plan. GAO analyzed DOD's strategic workforce plan and supporting documents, and met with managers of four functional communities within the civilian personnel community (information technology, financial management, logistics, and law enforcement), because they represent the three largest and the one smallest of the functional communities, to determine how they conducted their strategic workforce planning.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommendations include that DOD issue clearer guidance for assessing its skills and competencies, conduct and report on gap analysis of mission-critical occupations, clarify its guidance for assessing workforce mix issues, and enhance its performance measures to align with congressionally mandated reporting requirements. DOD concurred or partially concurred with GAO's recommendations. While DOD raised some issues about the need for further actions, GAO continues to believe that DOD's workforce planning could be enhanced.

View [GAO-12-1014](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov

HUMAN CAPITAL

DOD Needs Complete Assessments to Improve Future Civilian Strategic Workforce Plans

What GAO Found

Over the last decade, Congress has passed legislation requiring the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct human capital planning efforts for the department's civilian workforce. Specifically, section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code, enacted in October 2009, requires DOD to develop and submit to congressional defense committees a strategic workforce plan to shape and improve the department's civilian workforce. Among other things, the law requires DOD to report on the mission-critical skills, competencies, and gaps in its existing and future civilian workforces; the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities; and the department's progress in implementing its strategic workforce plan using results-oriented performance measures. While DOD has addressed some of its reporting requirements to some extent, it has not addressed others.

- DOD, to varying degrees, assessed the existing and future critical skills and competencies for 21 of the 22 occupations that it has identified as mission critical, but conducted competency gap assessments only for 8 of these 22 occupations. In some but not all cases, DOD provided details about skills and competencies. However, it did not report the results of any of its gap analyses for its mission-critical occupations.
- DOD did not assess the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor workforces or provide an assessment of the capabilities of each of these workforces. Only two of the civilian community managers who provided input presented data on all three workforces. The remaining nine community managers provided data only on military and civilian personnel. DOD guidance requires, among other things, that DOD missions be accomplished with the least costly mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel, consistent with military requirements and other needs of the department.
- DOD assessed progress in implementing its strategic workforce plan by using newly developed measures that contain characteristics of valid results-oriented performance measures, but these measures are not aligned with DOD's statutory reporting requirements. For example, although DOD is required to conduct gap analyses and assess its workforce mix, it is unclear how the measures that DOD developed will help to address these requirements.

The input to DOD's strategic workforce plan on critical skills and competencies varied, in part, because the reporting template that DOD sent to its civilian personnel community managers did not contain sufficient detail and clear definitions. Also, the template did not provide departmental expectations for conducting gap analyses or communicate clear guidance for reporting on workforce mix assessments. Without sufficiently detailed guidance to help ensure complete reporting, input into future plans will continue to vary and the plan's usefulness as a workforce planning document will be diminished. Further, in those cases where DOD's performance measures are not aligned with its congressionally mandated reporting requirements, it is difficult for DOD to demonstrate progress against those requirements.