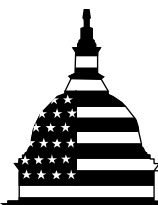


April 2013

MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Agencies Have Elevated Performance Management Leadership Roles, but Additional Training Is Needed



G A O

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

Why GAO Did This Study

The performance of federal agencies is central to delivering meaningful results to the American public. GPRAMA, along with related guidance, assigned responsibilities for managing performance to key officials. It also provided a statutory basis for the existing PIC, a council made up of agency PIOs that is tasked with assisting OMB with topics related to GPRAMA. GPRAMA directed GAO to report on the act's implementation. This report, one of a series under that mandate, (1) examines the status of federal agencies' implementation of the performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA and (2) evaluates the role of the PIC in facilitating the exchange of best practices and improving agency program management and performance.

To address both objectives, GAO conducted a survey of PIOs at all 24 CFO Act federal agencies, as well as in-depth case studies of HHS and NSF, which were selected because they have differing characteristics such as size. GAO also interviewed and obtained documents from OMB staff and OPM officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Director of OPM work with the PIC to identify competency gaps for agency performance management staff and use this information to identify and share relevant agency training. GAO also recommends that the Director of OMB work with the PIC to gather regular feedback from members on its performance and update its strategic plan. OPM and OMB staff agreed with these recommendations.

View [GAO-13-356](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

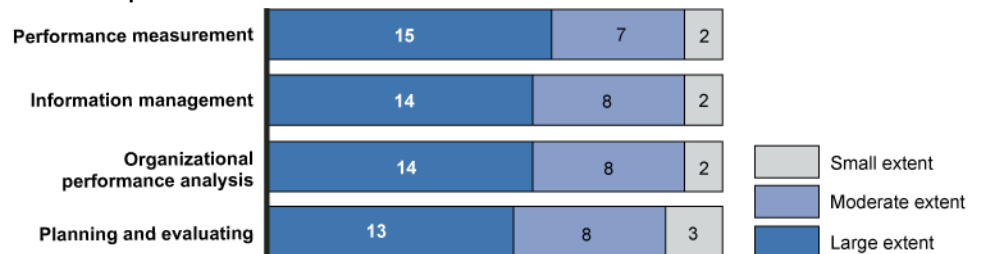
MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Agencies Have Elevated Performance Management Leadership Roles, but Additional Training Is Needed

What GAO Found

The designation of senior-level officials to key performance management roles with responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) has helped elevate accountability for performance management within federal agencies and ensure high-level involvement, according to officials GAO interviewed. The 24 Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act agencies have all assigned officials to the key management roles—chief operating officer, performance improvement officer (PIO), and goal leader—required under GPRAMA, according to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the results of GAO's PIO survey. PIOs GAO surveyed reported that most key officials were greatly involved in central aspects of performance management, such as agency quarterly performance reviews. PIOs GAO surveyed, and priority goal leaders GAO interviewed at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), reported they were supported in their responsibilities by their deputies and other staff. PIOs generally reported that their staff had competencies identified as relevant by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), such as reasoning, to a large extent, although PIOs reported that the competencies in the figure below were not as widespread among their staff as the other competencies.

PIOs' Assessments of the Extent to Which Their Performance Management Staff Possessed Selected Competencies



Source: GAO.

OPM has taken steps to work with agencies to incorporate performance management staff competencies into training. For example, OPM is working with the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) to develop a website that will include such training. However, at this time, it does not plan to assess competency gaps among agency performance management staff to inform its work. Without this information, it will be difficult for OPM, working with the PIC, to focus on the most-needed resources and facilitate their use by other agencies.

PIOs generally found that sharing of best practices and development of tips and tools are the most helpful aspects of the PIC, and reported strong agency attendance at meetings and participation in working groups. However, the PIC has not regularly collected member feedback about its performance. Additionally, although the PIC has a strategic plan in place, it has not updated it since GPRAMA was enacted. Routine member feedback and an updated strategic plan that reflects changes required by GPRAMA could help increase the PIC's effectiveness. Without these assessment tools, the PIC lacks an important basis and means for directing and evaluating its performance.

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Abbreviations

CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFO Act	Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990
CLO	Chief Learning Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
GPRAMA	Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
NSF	National Science Foundation
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PIC	Performance Improvement Council
PIO	Performance Improvement Officer
SAC	Small Agency Council

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G A O

Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

April 16, 2013

Congressional Addressees

The performance and results of federal agencies have a significant impact on many issues of great importance to the American public, ranging from public health to homeland security to training the country's workforce. Our previous work has found that two of the most important elements that contribute to sustained performance improvement are a demonstrated commitment from top agency leadership and clear lines of accountability for making management improvements.¹

To focus and sustain attention on agency performance and improvement, Congress enacted the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA).² GPRAMA, along with related Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance, established and defined performance management responsibilities for agency officials in key management roles: the agency head, chief operating officer (COO), performance improvement officer (PIO), deputy PIO, goal leader, and deputy goal leader.³ The officials in these roles constitute an agency's performance management leadership team. GPRAMA also established in law the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), chaired by OMB's Deputy Director for Management and composed of PIOs from various federal agencies. Among other responsibilities, the PIC is charged with facilitating the exchange of successful performance management practices among agencies and assisting OMB in implementing certain GPRAMA requirements.

This report is part of a series of reports under our mandate to examine how agencies are implementing GPRAMA, such as by conducting

¹GAO, *Government Performance: GPRAMA Modernization Act Provides Opportunities to Help Address Fiscal, Performance, and Management Challenges*, [GAO-11-466T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 16, 2011).

²Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (Jan. 4, 2011). GPRAMA amends the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285 (Aug. 3, 1993).

³OMB Circular No. A-11, *Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget* (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 3, 2012), and OMB Memorandum M-11-31, *Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government* (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2011).

quarterly performance reviews to assess progress on agency priority goals.⁴ The objectives of this report are to (1) examine the status of federal agencies' implementation of the performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA, and (2) evaluate the role of the PIC in facilitating the exchange of best practices and improving agency program management and performance.⁵

To address both objectives, we administered a survey of PIOs at the 24 agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (CFO Act) from October 2012 through December 2012 and received responses from all 24 PIOs.⁶ Selected results from our survey were also reported in our February 2013 report focusing on quarterly performance reviews under GPRAMA.⁷ In order to understand GPRAMA implementation in more detail and put survey results in context for both objectives, we conducted case studies of two CFO Act agencies—the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF)—focusing on their implementation of performance management leadership roles and participation in the PIC. We selected these agencies because they have differing characteristics that may affect implementation, such as agency size and the career status of the official in the PIO role. We obtained documentation and conducted interviews with both agencies' COOs, PIOs, and deputy PIOs. In addition, in order to understand the priority goal leader role and its contributions to performance management, we selected three of HHS's six agency priority goals and two of NSF's three agency priority goals and interviewed the responsible

⁴Other reports in this series include: GAO, *Managing for Results: Data-Driven Performance Reviews Show Promise But Agencies Should Explore How to Involve Other Relevant Agencies*, [GAO-13-228](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 27, 2013); and *Managing for Results: GAO's Work Related to the Interim Crosscutting Priority Goals under the GPRAMA Modernization Act*, [GAO-12-620R](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 31, 2012).

⁵The PIC has additional responsibilities under GPRAMA and OMB guidance, such as assisting OMB in implementing the planning, reporting, and use of performance information requirements related to federal government priority goals, also referred to as cross-agency priority goals. We did not focus our review on these other functions.

⁶See appendix I for a full list of the 24 agencies surveyed.

⁷[GAO-13-228](#).

goal leaders.⁸ For goals that had two goal leaders assigned, we interviewed one of the responsible goal leaders. We also interviewed OMB staff and officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) about their work under GPRAMA, including their work with agencies and the PIC in implementing GPRAMA.

To further address both objectives, we reviewed GPRAMA and related OMB guidance about the key management roles and the PIC. We reviewed information provided to us by OMB on the officials in the roles, along with information on them that is publicly available through OMB's performance.gov website and agency websites.

To further address our second objective, we analyzed PIC meeting agendas from February 2009 through September 2012, and observed part of the September 12, 2012, PIC meeting. We interviewed the PIC's Executive Director and officials from the Small Agency Council and the chair of its Performance Improvement Committee, which interacts with the PIC. Further details of our objectives, scope, and methodology are contained in appendix II.

We conducted our work from May 2012 to April 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

GPRAMA made a number of changes to agency performance management roles, and provided the officials in these roles with specific duties. Among other things, the requirements for these roles reflected Congress's intention to increase accountability of senior agency leadership for performance and results. Although these roles existed at some agencies prior to GPRAMA, it established them in law, added responsibilities, and elevated some of them. Later OMB guidance

⁸Every 2 years, GPRAMA requires agency heads from the CFO Act agencies, or those otherwise determined by OMB, to designate a subset of priority goals from the performance goals in their agency's performance plans. These goals should reflect the highest priorities of the agency as determined by the agency head.

established additional performance management roles related to implementation of GPRAMA.⁹ The primary roles with responsibilities under GPRAMA and in OMB guidance are:

- *Agency head:* GPRAMA gave each agency's head broad responsibility for performance management. Among other things, the agency head is responsible for identifying agency priority goals and, along with the COO discussed in the next paragraph, conducting quarterly priority goal progress reviews.
- *Chief operating officer:* The COO role existed at agencies prior to GPRAMA's enactment, with responsibilities such as improving agency management and performance outlined in two presidential memoranda.¹⁰ GPRAMA maintained these previously established responsibilities, and added others to bring them in line with other GPRAMA requirements. It also required that the deputy agency head or equivalent serve as COO.
- *Performance improvement officer:* The PIO role was created by a 2007 executive order.¹¹ GPRAMA established the role in law and elevated it, specifying that it be given to a "senior executive" at each agency and that the PIO report directly to the agency's COO. The various duties of the PIO include advising the agency head and COO on goal-setting and measurement and reviewing progress toward agency priority goals.
- *Deputy performance improvement officer:* The deputy PIO role was not included in GPRAMA, but later OMB guidance directed agencies with a PIO who is a political appointee or other official with a limited-term appointment to also appoint a career senior executive as deputy PIO.¹²

⁹OMB Memorandum M-11-31, *Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government* (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2011), and OMB Circular No. A-11.

¹⁰The White House, *Presidential Memorandum, Implementing Government Reform*, (Washington, D.C.: July 11, 2001), and *Presidential Memorandum, Implementing Management Reform in the Executive Branch*, (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 1, 1993).

¹¹See Executive Order No. 13,450, *Improving Government Program Performance*, (Nov. 13, 2007).

¹²OMB, Circular No. A-11.

-
- *Goal leader.* GPRAMA directs agencies to identify a goal leader who is responsible for each priority goal and make this information available to OMB to be published online.¹³ Leaders for agency priority goals are identified, with their photos, on the performance.gov website. A similar position existed at some agencies prior to GPRAMA, as earlier OMB guidance had encouraged agencies to identify officials who were responsible for High Priority Performance Goals (these goals have since been renamed as agency priority goals).¹⁴
 - *Deputy goal leader.* The deputy goal leader role was not included in GPRAMA, but later OMB guidance directed agencies to identify a deputy goal leader to support the goal leader.¹⁵ In cases where the goal leader was a political appointee, OMB encouraged agencies to assign a career senior executive as the deputy.

GPRAMA also assigned responsibilities to OPM related to agency performance management. By January 2012, the agency was to identify skills and competencies needed by government personnel for setting goals, evaluating programs, and analyzing and using performance information for improving government efficiency and effectiveness. GPRAMA also directed OPM, by January 2013, to incorporate these competencies into relevant position classifications and to work with each agency to incorporate the skills and competencies into employee training.

OMB has a leadership and coordinating role in agency implementation of GPRAMA. OMB issued guidance on implementation through memoranda and in Circular A-11.¹⁶ Under GPRAMA, OMB is to ensure the operation of a public website that includes information on cross-agency priority goals and agency priority goals, among other performance-related

¹³Throughout this report, when we refer to goal leaders, we are referring to leaders for agency priority goals. Under OMB Circular A-11, agencies may also have goal leaders for their strategic objectives, but we did not focus on this role in our report.

¹⁴In 2009, OMB required agencies to identify High Priority Performance Goals that, among other things, were achievable within 12 to 24 months and were highly valued by the public or reflecting achievement of agency missions.

¹⁵OMB, Circular No. A-11.

¹⁶OMB Memorandum M-11-31, *Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government* (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2011), and OMB Circular No. A-11.

information. This information is included on the performance.gov website. OMB's Deputy Director for Management, or his or her designee, is directed to chair the PIC and preside at its meetings, determine meeting agendas, direct its work, and establish and direct its subgroups.

GPRAMA also included specific requirements for the PIC. The PIC was initially created by a 2007 executive order, but GPRAMA established it in law and included additional specific responsibilities.¹⁷ In addition to directing OMB's Deputy Director for Management to chair the PIC, GPRAMA specified that council membership include the PIOs from the 24 CFO Act agencies, as well as any other PIOs and individuals identified by OMB's Deputy Director for Management. The PIC's duties are detailed in GPRAMA and later OMB guidance and include facilitating the exchange of useful practices and developing tips and tools to strengthen agency performance management. According to the PIC's Executive Director, the PIC and the Executive Director are supported by two federal employees and four contractors. The PIC also typically has two to four detailees from other federal agencies.¹⁸ The PIC is administratively located within the General Service Administration's Office of Executive Councils. According to a PIC staff member, the Office of Executive Councils provides infrastructure, analytical support, and project management capacity to the PIC and other interagency management councils, such as the Chief Financial Officers Council.

¹⁷See Executive Order 13,450.

¹⁸GPRAMA requires the heads of agencies with PIOs serving on the PIC to provide, as appropriate and to the extent permitted by law, up to two personnel authorizations to serve upon the request of the PIC's chairperson.

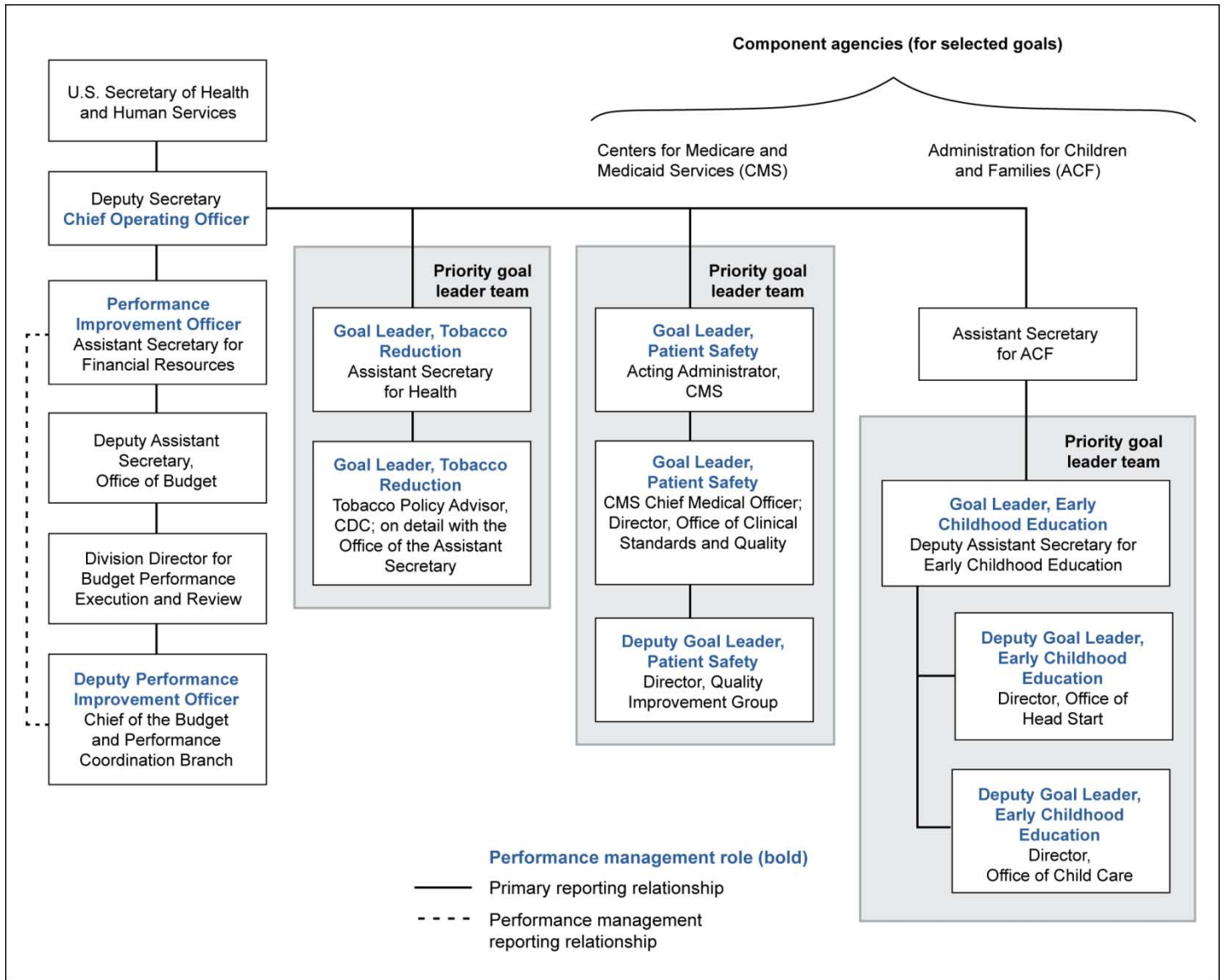
Agencies Have Elevated Performance Management Roles, but Performance Staff Competency Assessment and Training Are Needed

Designation of Senior-Level Officials to Key Performance Management Roles Has Helped to Elevate Accountability for Agency Performance

The 24 CFO Act agencies have all assigned senior-level officials to the key performance management roles—chief operating officer, performance improvement officer, and goal leader—required under GPRAMA, according to OMB and the results of our PIO survey.¹⁹ Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the performance management leadership teams at HHS and NSF, respectively.

¹⁹The Nuclear Regulatory Commission does not have goal leaders because it does not have priority goals.

Figure 1: Selected Performance Management Leadership Roles at HHS, as of April 2013

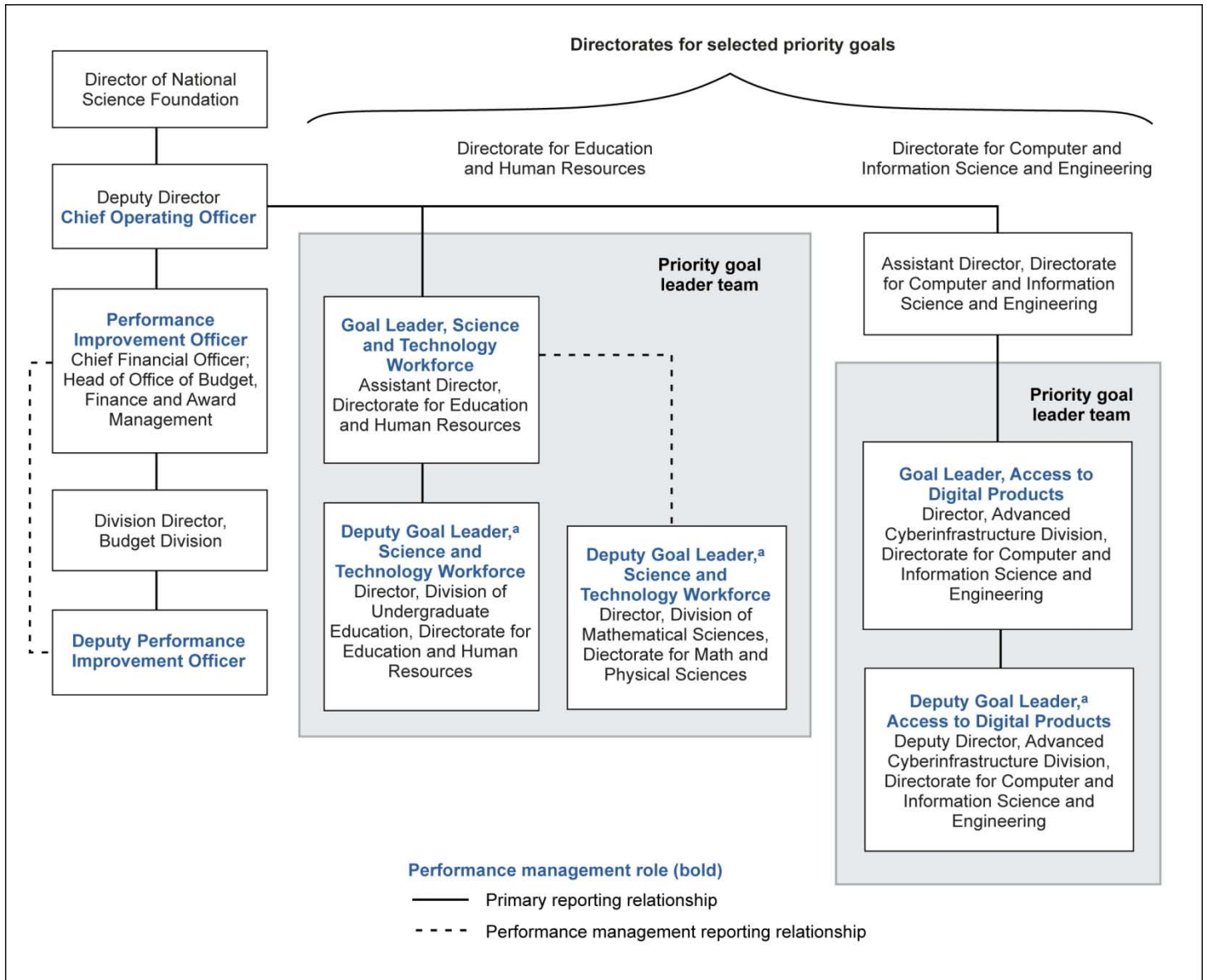


Source: GAO.

Notes: The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 requires that each agency's PIO report directly to the COO.

The goals depicted in this chart are the ones for which we interviewed the priority goal leaders. HHS has three additional priority goals.

Figure 2: Selected Performance Management Leadership Roles at NSF, as of April 2013



Performance management role (bold)

—— Primary reporting relationship

- - - - Performance management reporting relationship

Source: GAO.

Notes: The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 requires that each agency's PIO report directly to the COO.

The goals depicted in this chart are the ones for which we interviewed the priority goal leaders. NSF has one additional priority goal.

^aNSF refers to its deputy goal leaders as "goal lieutenants."

Chief operating officer. GPRAMA's requirement that each agency's deputy head, or equivalent, take on the role of COO helped to ensure high-level involvement in performance management. GPRAMA required the COO to be involved in activities such as quarterly performance reviews. As we discuss later, most (21) PIOs we surveyed reported that their agencies' COOs were involved in quarterly performance reviews to a large extent.²⁰ The COOs at both HHS and NSF told us they were involved in selecting their agencies' priority goals and they chaired the quarterly performance review meetings. HHS's COO said that he considered it his role to make sure that everyone in the agency paid attention to performance and knew that he considered it important. NSF's COO said that she saw performance management as a primary concern and integrally connected to all aspects of her work at NSF.

Performance improvement officer. Although the PIO role existed prior to GPRAMA, PIOs were not required to report directly to the COO until GPRAMA was enacted. GPRAMA elevated the role by putting this requirement in place. According to our PIO survey, at 8 agencies the PIO who was already in place took on the additional responsibilities required by GPRAMA.²¹ At the other 16 agencies, the current PIO began in the role after the implementation of GPRAMA.

All PIOs we surveyed reported that they have other agency roles in addition to being the PIO. Most PIOs (21) reported that these roles gave them access and authority that has been helpful in the PIO role, and most (20) reported that these roles gave them knowledge and experience that has been helpful in the PIO role. These roles included planning, administration, management, and budget and finance. The PIOs at HHS and NSF were both also chief financial officers (CFO), and told us that their other agency roles helped them in their PIO roles. HHS's PIO said that her joint role allowed her to align budget development with performance management—she made sure that the budget was built so that dollars were spent on efforts that would be able to perform well. NSF's PIO told us that the two roles worked well together because much of the data used to evaluate performance at the agency was maintained

²⁰We previously reported in more detail on agency officials' involvement in performance review meetings. [GAO-13-228](#).

²¹The PIO position was established in 2007 by Executive Order 13,450.

by the agency's budget division, which also reports to her in her CFO capacity.

NSF's COO noted that the PIO role at NSF was designated for reasons relating more to the individual, including the PIO's past experience with performance management, than to her role as CFO. The COO said that NSF's next PIO may not necessarily be the person in the CFO role. Although it was common for the PIOs we surveyed to also have the CFO role, PIOs whose other roles were in planning, administration, and management reported that those roles were helpful as well.

Nearly all PIOs (23) reported that their level of authority and access to agency leadership helped them perform their duties. Additionally, almost half of surveyed PIOs (11) reported directly to the agency head in their non-PIO role; they had even higher level authority and access to leadership than the PIO role alone would have provided.²² OMB staff added that because they were senior level officials, PIOs had the authority and ability to assemble the right people to implement performance management at their agencies.

Our survey results did not indicate great differences between political appointees and career civil servants in carrying out PIO duties.²³ OMB staff told us that the requirement that agencies with political appointee PIOs have career civil servant deputy PIOs was in place to address the higher likelihood of turnover among political appointees. However, our PIO survey results did not indicate great differences in either time spent on PIO duties or turnover so far. Additionally, nearly all the agencies (22), not just those with political appointee PIOs, have chosen to designate deputy PIOs.²⁴

Goal leader. Agencies assigned senior-level officials with expertise in the goal to take on the role of priority goal leader. This was true at HHS and NSF, and was also true across agencies, according to OMB staff.

²²Eleven PIOs reported directly to the agency head. Four of these 11 PIOs said that they reported directly to the agency head as well as directly to another individual, such as the agency's deputy secretary.

²³PIOs we surveyed were nearly evenly split between political appointees (11) and career civil servants (13).

²⁴Eleven of the 13 agencies with career civil servant PIOs also had deputy PIOs.

PIOs and Priority Goal Leaders
Reported That Deputies
Supported Them in Day-to-Day
Performance Management

Officials at NSF and HHS said that priority goals had senior-level leaders who helped to bring attention and resources to the goal. For example, the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Health was one of two goal leaders for HHS's priority goal on reducing tobacco consumption. He previously worked on tobacco cessation at the state level, was a public health professor, and published journal articles on tobacco control and health promotion. The goal's other leader told us that because the Assistant Secretary was widely known within the public health community, his involvement brought respect and attention to the goal.

As discussed previously, the PIO and goal leader positions were filled by senior-level agency officials. Most of these officials had other responsibilities, such as serving as a CFO. HHS and NSF officials told us that while the PIO and goal leader roles were performed by senior-level officials at the highest levels of the agency, they relied on deputies who generally managed the day-to-day aspects of performance management.

Deputy performance improvement officer. Nearly all (22) of the CFO Act agencies have assigned officials to the Deputy PIO role, according to our PIO survey. Both HHS and NSF have assigned staff to the deputy PIO role. Officials at HHS and NSF also told us that PIOs tended to provide high-level vision and oversight and be a voice for performance management at their agencies, while deputy PIOs handled the day-to-day management of performance management for the agency. According to officials at HHS and NSF, responsibilities of deputy PIOs at these agencies included, among other things, coordinating with priority goal leaders, preparing for agency quarterly performance reviews, and attending PIC meetings, as appropriate. PIOs reported that most deputies devoted half or more of their time to performance-related duties.

Deputy PIOs also had other roles and titles at agencies, similar to the PIOs. Based on our analysis of their other titles, deputy PIOs most commonly had other roles also related to performance, while others filled roles in areas such as budget and finance and administration and management.

Most Key Officials Were Greatly Involved in Central Aspects of Performance Management, According to PIOs

Deputy goal leader. HHS and NSF both assigned officials to deputy goal leader roles to support most of their goal leaders.²⁵ As with the PIO/deputy PIO division, the goal leaders at our case study agencies were senior-level officials. According to agency officials, goal leaders provided high-level vision and oversight and lent their influence to ensure that the goal was prioritized, while their deputy goal leaders managed the goal on a day-to-day basis. For example, deputy goal leaders at these agencies were responsible for monitoring staff carrying out the goal and preparing reports on the goal for quarterly performance reviews. Two goal leaders we spoke with—one at HHS and one at NSF—had two deputy goal leaders. Moreover, at NSF, one goal leader we spoke with was supported by a deputy from a different operating division.²⁶ The goal leader told us that this structure provided a cross-agency perspective and facilitated coordination.

PIOs reported that they and other key performance management officials at their agencies were involved in central aspects of performance management. We asked PIOs whether agency heads, COOs, PIOs, deputy PIOs, and goal leaders had large, moderate, small, or no involvement in four primary tasks that summarize the performance management responsibilities required by GPRAMA:

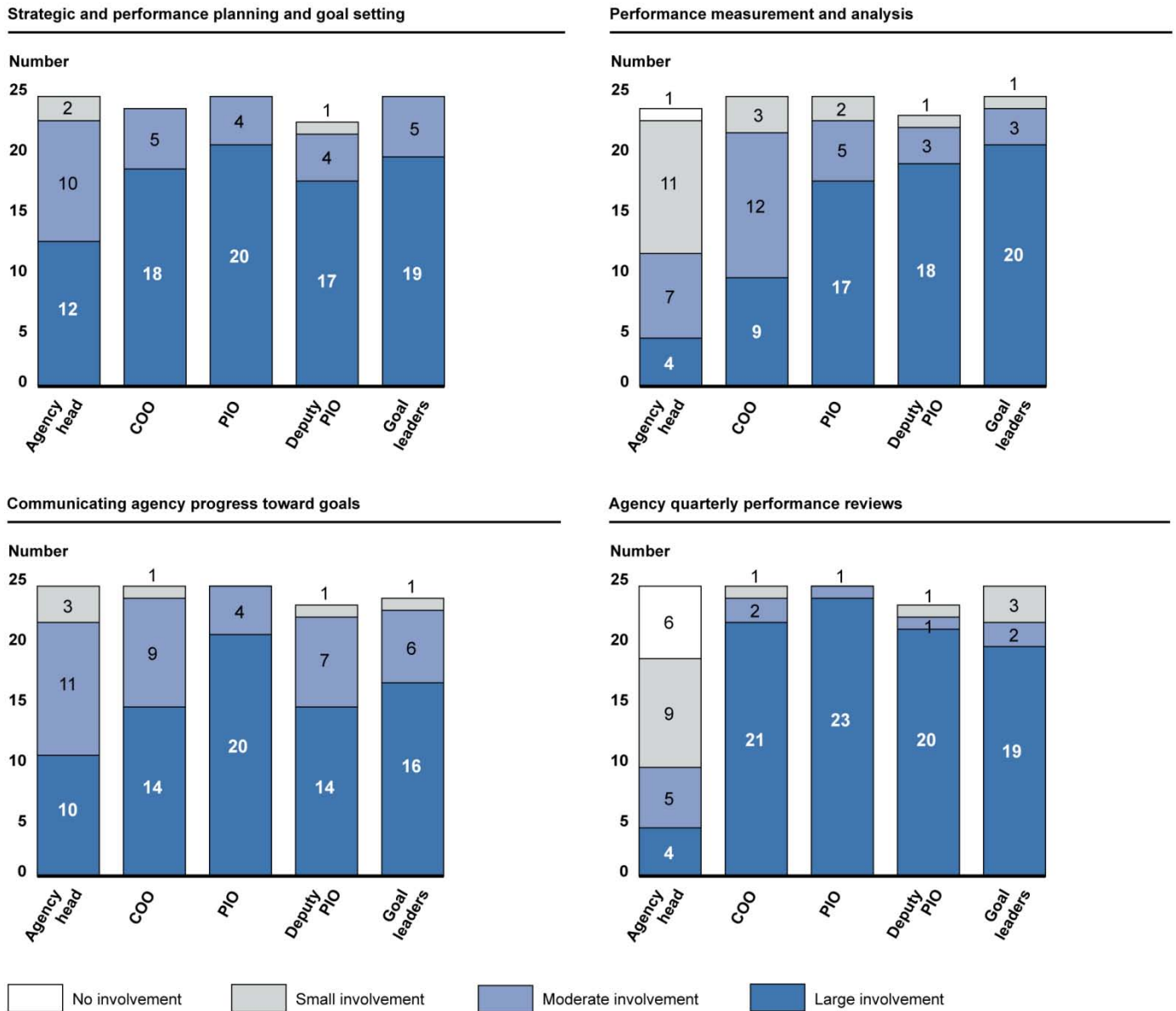
- strategic and performance planning and goal setting;
- performance measurement and analysis;
- communicating agency progress toward goals; and
- agency quarterly performance reviews.

As shown in figure 3, the PIOs we surveyed reported that most performance management officials had large involvement in these key tasks.

²⁵HHS has also designated performance officers for each of its component agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with staff supporting those officials. Performance officers supported performance management within each component agency and coordinated across component agencies and with HHS's central Performance Improvement Office. HHS's deputy PIO told us that the performance officers were his primary points of contact at component agencies for matters regarding performance management.

²⁶NSF refers to its deputy goal leaders as "goal lieutenants."

Figure 3: Most Key Officials Were Involved in Central Aspects of Performance Management to a Large Extent



Source: GAO.

Notes: The charts do not include responses of no opinion and not applicable.

The data presented in this figure are based on PIOs' responses to four survey questions: "How much involvement, if any, does each of the following officials have in: (1) strategic and performance planning and goal setting; (2) performance measurement and analysis; (3) communicating agency progress towards goals, both internally and externally; and (4) your agency's quarterly performance reviews?"

Officials at HHS and NSF emphasized the importance of commitment to performance management at all levels, which was in part reflected in officials' involvement in these key aspects. PIOs who reported large involvement for themselves generally reported larger involvement for other officials, suggesting that agencies with a strong commitment to performance management were following this philosophy.

OPM Has Identified Competencies for Performance Management Staff, but Competency Assessment and Additional Training Would Be Beneficial

GPRAMA directed OPM to take certain actions to support agency hiring and training of performance management staff. As noted earlier, OPM, in consultation with the PIC, was charged with three responsibilities under GPRAMA: (1) identify key skills and competencies needed by performance management staff; (2) incorporate these skills and competencies into relevant position classifications; and (3) work with agencies to incorporate these key skills into agency training.²⁷ OPM has completed its work on its first two responsibilities, and is working to support agency training.

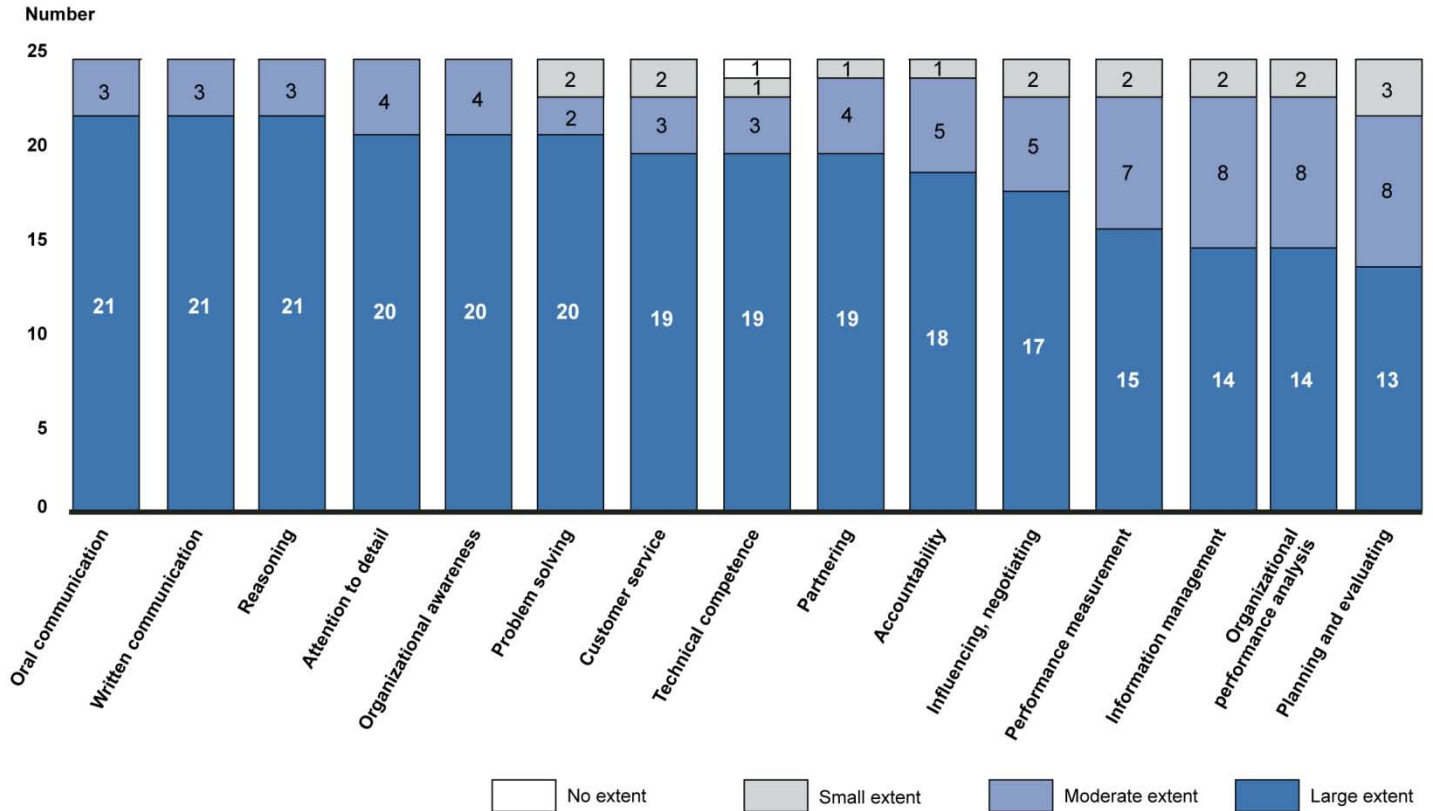
PIOs Were Generally Satisfied That Staff Possessed Competencies Identified by OPM, but Some Could Be Improved

OPM identified 15 core competencies for performance management staff, in accordance with GPRAMA, and published them in a January 2012 memorandum from the OPM Director. (See app. III for a list of the competencies with definitions.) OPM also identified competencies needed by PIOs and goal leaders. A manager of classification and assessment policy at OPM told us that OPM's work to identify these competencies included a review of GPRAMA and related information. OPM also worked with a PIC working group focused on capability building to review the competencies it identified.

Figure 4 shows PIOs' responses to our survey question about the extent to which their staff had these competencies.

²⁷GPRAMA, Sec. 12a ("Performance Management Skills and Competencies") states, "Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Performance Improvement Council, shall identify the key skills and competencies needed by Federal Government personnel for developing goals, evaluating programs, and analyzing and using performance information for the purpose of improving Government efficiency and effectiveness." Sections 12b ("Position Classifications") and 12c ("Incorporation Into Existing Agency Training") direct OPM to, within 2 years after GPRAMA's enactment, incorporate these skills and competencies into relevant positions classifications and training for relevant employees at each agency.

Figure 4: PIO Survey Showed Most Performance Management Staff Competencies Were Present to a Large Extent, but a Few Needed Improvement



Source: GAO.

Notes: See appendix III for definitions of the competencies.

The data presented in the figure are based on PIOs' responses to the question: "To what extent does your performance improvement staff have each of the following competencies that OPM has identified?"

PIOs generally reported that their staff had the competencies identified by OPM to a large extent, although they reported that the competencies below were not as widespread as others:²⁸

²⁸Definitions of these competencies are from OPM's *Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers: Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 Functional Competencies* (Jan. 3, 2012).

-
- *Performance measurement*: the knowledge of the principles and methods for evaluating program or organizational performance using financial and nonfinancial measures.
 - *Information management*: the ability to identify a need for information, know how to gather information and organize and maintain information or information management systems.
 - *Organizational performance analysis*: the knowledge of the methods and tools used to analyze program, organizational, and mission performance.
 - *Planning and evaluating*: the ability to organize work, set priorities, and determine resource requirements. This includes determining short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them, coordinating with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals, and monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.

Some individual agencies found competency gaps in similar areas. HHS's Deputy PIO told us that further improvement of HHS's performance staff's analytical skills would help the agency to more effectively implement GPRAMA. Also, as we reported in February 2013, Small Business Administration officials identified a skills gap among some of their staff in working with data.²⁹

OPM officials had planned to develop a competency assessment tool that could be used to determine needs at each individual agency.³⁰ Developing the tool was identified as a critical and manageable "next step" at a January 2012 meeting focused on incorporating key performance management competencies into agency training. Meeting participants included OMB, OPM, and agency members of the Chief Learning Officers (CLO) Council, which facilitates collaboration among CLOs. OPM officials told us that they took action to follow up on other

²⁹[GAO-13-228](#).

³⁰Participants at the January 2012 meeting suggested that OPM develop a way to measure competency gaps using its Federal Competency Assessment Tool, according to meeting minutes. OPM has customized versions of the assessment tool for human resources professionals and supervisors. For example, the assessment tool for human resources is a web-based instrument for assessing the current proficiency levels for human resources professionals.

“next steps” related to training identified at the meeting, which are discussed in the following section. However, an OPM official relayed to us that at this time, OPM does not plan to conduct a formal competency assessment using a competency assessment tool. A group manager in OPM’s Training and Executive Development division told us that the agency is focused on identifying critical skills gaps across the federal government. She said that some of the government-wide skills that OPM plans to focus on are related to skills needed for performance management, such as data analysis.

OPM Worked with the PIC to Develop a Draft Toolkit to Assist Agencies with Hiring Performance Management Staff

OPM identified relevant position classifications that are related to the competencies for performance management staff, and worked with the PIC Capability Building working group to develop related guidance and tools for agencies. A manager of Classification and Assessment Policy at OPM told us that the competencies best fit into an existing classification series for management and program analysts. In addition, OPM worked with the PIC’s Capability Building working group to develop position descriptions for performance management staff. In December 2012, the Capability Building working group released to agencies a draft performance analyst position design, recruitment, and selection toolkit. The draft toolkit included position description templates for performance analysts, job opportunity announcement templates, and recruiting resources, among other information. NSF officials told us that they found the Capability Building working group’s performance analyst position description helpful and used it to develop the agency’s deputy PIO position, which has been recently filled. The toolkit may also be of use to other agencies planning to hire new performance management staff. About half (11) of PIOs reported that their agencies planned to hire new staff, in addition to training existing staff, in order to address competency gaps.

OPM Has Taken Steps to Assist Agencies with Training Performance Management Staff, but a More Targeted Focus Would Be Beneficial

According to OPM, the 15 core competencies for performance management staff are moderately to highly trainable, and OPM has taken steps to work with agencies to incorporate the competencies into training programs for relevant staff.³¹ Most (18) PIOs reported that their agencies planned to train staff in order to strengthen their performance management competencies. OPM’s Director stated in a January 2012

³¹OPM classified the competencies by trainability based on principles from a U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board study, *Making the Right Connections: Targeting the Best Competencies for Training* (Washington, D.C.: February 2011).

memorandum that the agency would work with CLOs to incorporate GPRAMA competencies into agency training programs.³² OPM worked with the CLO Council and the PIC Capability Building working group to develop a website—the *Training and Development Policy Wiki*—that lists some training resources for performance management staff. OPM also sponsored two webcasts focused on sharing agency experiences using performance management tools. A manager in OPM’s Training and Executive Development division told us that OPM was developing an interactive, online course focused on writing measurable performance goals that align with organizational goals, which she expected would be completed by July 2013. According to the official, both the webcasts and the work on the online course were the result of “next steps” identified at the January 2012 meeting between OPM, OMB, and members of the CLO Council.

OPM Human Resources specialists said they were also working to help the PIC to develop a website with more extensive resources, including information on training as well as performance management career path information. According to OPM officials and the PIC’s Executive Director, the PIC will develop the content for this website and it will be modeled on OPM’s Human Resources University website, which provides human resources career path information and links to related training. A Workforce Development Manager at OPM said the agency will support the PIC on the technical aspects of the site based on its experience developing the Human Resources University site. According to OMB staff and OPM, the performance management website is scheduled to launch by the end of 2013.

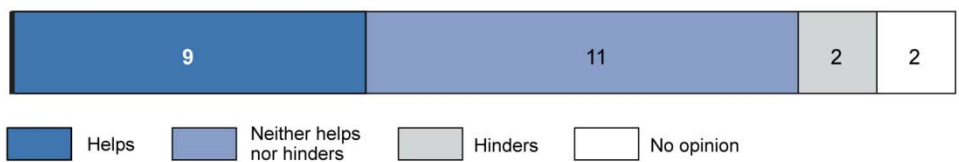
In addition to OPM’s actions on performance management training, individual agencies have taken action to develop their own performance management training to address competency gaps. For example, as we described in our recent report on quarterly performance reviews, SBA developed courses focused on skills such as spreadsheet development and analysis, presentation delivery, and other analytic and presentation skills.³³

³²OPM, *Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers: Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 Functional Competencies*, Jan. 3, 2012.

³³[GAO-13-228](#).

According to our survey of PIOs, less than half (9) of the PIOs we surveyed rated the level of access to and availability of performance management training at their agencies as helpful, as shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: Less Than Half of PIOs Reported that the Current Level of Access and Availability of Performance Management Training Was Helpful



Source: GAO.

Note: The data in the figure are based on PIOs' responses to the question: "Does the level of access/availability of training related to analysis and performance management help or hinder your ability to perform your duties as a PIO?"

OPM's efforts so far to work with agencies to incorporate performance improvement skills and competencies into agency training have been relatively broad-based and have not been informed by specific assessments of agency training needs. As described earlier, the agency has not followed through on its plan to measure agency staff competency levels in key areas required for performance management. Our survey results suggest that certain areas need to be improved, but without a more comprehensive assessment, it will be difficult for OPM to target its efforts—both to identify training that addresses agency needs, and to make training available through its performance website, which is under development, or through other means.

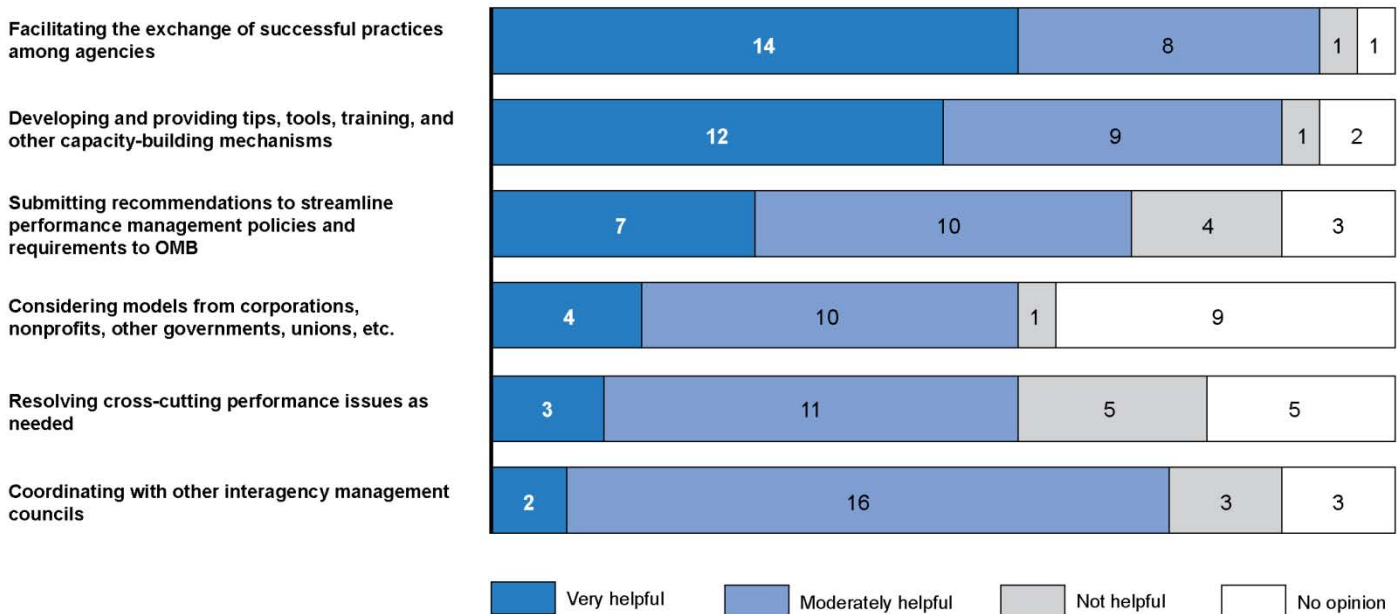
PIOs and Selected Agencies Found the PIC Useful, but Additional Planning and Performance Assessment Are Needed

PIOs Reported that the Most Helpful Aspects of the PIC Were Sharing of Best Practices and Development of Tips and Tools

PIOs we surveyed generally found the PIC's work to be helpful to their agencies. We asked the PIOs to rate the helpfulness of selected functions that GPRAMA and OMB guidance direct the PIC to perform. As shown in figure 6, PIOs generally rated the PIC's work in these areas as helpful. The PIC's work promoting communication and developing tools incorporated several practices that our past work has identified as necessary for building collaborative working relationships.³⁴ These include establishing means to operate across agency boundaries and identifying and addressing needs by leveraging resources.

³⁴GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

Figure 6: PIOs Generally Rated PIC Functions as Helpful to Their Agencies



Source: GAO.

Notes:

The data presented in this figure are based on PIOs' responses to the question "Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) and OMB guidance identify the following responsibilities of the Performance Improvement Council. How helpful have the following aspects been to your agency?"

The survey also asked PIOs how helpful PIOs found the Performance Improvement Council's (PIC) work in seeking advice and information from nonmember agencies, particularly smaller agencies. Because we discuss the PICs coordination in this area elsewhere, from the perspective of small agencies, we did not present the results from this question here. They are included in appendix IV with the full survey results.

Most (17) PIOs we surveyed reported that they have been able to apply successful practices and other information and tools shared by the PIC.³⁵ PIOs surveyed reported some examples of information shared by the PIC that they applied at their agencies, including information on performance management positions, goal-setting, and quarterly performance reviews.

³⁵Specifically, 17 PIOs reported that they were able to apply successful practices and other information and tools shared by the PIC. Two agencies reported that they have been able to do so to a large extent, 9 to a moderate extent, and 6 to a small extent.

PIOs we surveyed and agency officials we interviewed reported that the PIC has been particularly helpful in facilitating the exchange of successful practices among agencies. An OMB staff member told us that facilitating this type of exchange was the PIC's greatest strength, and that doing so also helped the group identify best practices. As shown in figure 6, just over half of PIOs reported that the PIC was very helpful in this area. Senior agency officials we interviewed and PIOs we surveyed provided examples of ways in which the PIC facilitated information exchange. For example, a PIO we surveyed reported that his agency's approach to quarterly performance reviews was informed by examples shared by other agencies in the PIC's Internal Agency Reviews working group.

An OMB staff member told us that in addition to helping agencies, the PIC's facilitation of information exchange has benefitted OMB. One of the tasks GPRAMA charged the PIC with was submitting recommendations to streamline and improve performance management policies and requirements to OMB. PIOs we surveyed generally reported that this function was helpful to their agencies.³⁶ An OMB staff member told us that the PIC helped OMB staff determine best practices and use that information to inform policy. For example, they said that in response to feedback from PIC members, OMB added information on "other indicators" to its 2012 Circular A-11 guidance.³⁷

Another area in which PIOs reported that the PIC was particularly helpful was in developing and providing tips, tools, training, and other capacity-building mechanisms. Half of PIOs reported that the PIC was very helpful in this area. PIOs we surveyed and officials we interviewed reported various ways in which their agencies have used PIC information. For example, five of the PIOs we surveyed reported that their agencies used PIC information on goal setting.

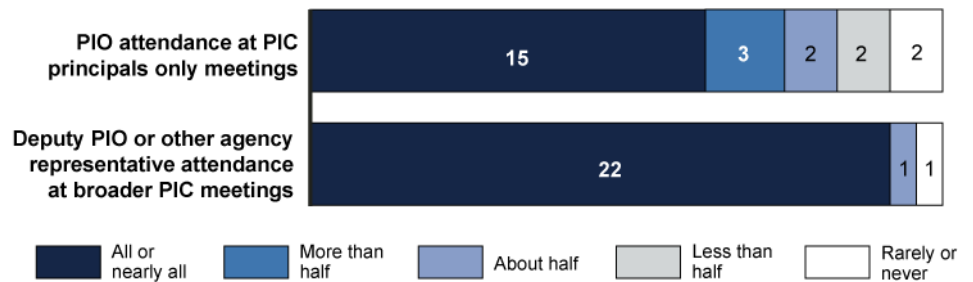
³⁶Seven said it was "very helpful," 10 reported that it was "moderately helpful," 4 "not helpful," and 3 had no opinion.

³⁷"Other indicators" are defined as indicators agencies use to provide context on agency progress that do not require targets and timeframes—for example, data about unwanted side effects.

PIOs Reported Strong Agency Participation in the PIC and in Its Working Groups

The PIC holds two types of meetings—a “principals only” meeting open to PIOs only, and a broader meeting open to PIOs as well as other agency staff—both of which are well attended, according to PIOs we surveyed. OMB staff told us that these two types of meetings were generally held on alternating months. As shown in figure 7, most of the PIOs we surveyed told us that they regularly attended the “principals only” PIC meetings. OMB staff told us that in order to encourage senior-level attendance, PIOs were not permitted to send substitutes in their place. Most PIOs also reported that their deputies or other staff members regularly attended the broader PIC meetings. OMB staff estimated that two to three representatives from each agency typically attended these meetings. In our previous work, we identified regular participation in activities such as meetings as an important feature of effective collaboration.³⁸

Figure 7: Agency Officials Regularly Attended PIC Meetings, According to PIOs



Source: GAO.

Note: the data presented in this figure are based on PIOs’ responses to two survey questions: “How often do you attend the every-other-month Performance Improvement Council (PIC) meetings that are for PIOs only (not deputies or staff)?” and “How often does a deputy PIO or another representative(s) from your agency attend the every-other-month Performance Improvement Council meetings that are open to PIOs, deputy PIOs, and staff?”

Agency participation in PIC working groups was also strong, and PIOs and other agency officials reported using information and products shared through working groups. The PIC established five working groups, three of which were actively meeting at the time of our review, to focus on specific topics (see table 1).³⁹ According to the PIC’s Executive Director,

³⁸GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms*, GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

³⁹GPRAMA directs the chairperson of the PIC to establish and direct working groups to deal with particular subjects.

PIC working groups focused on issues related to implementation of GPRAMA and related guidance and provided a forum for staff from different agencies who were working on similar issues to connect with each other. He told us that the PIC identified the working group topics based on informal input from PIC members, though the council might in the future solicit more formal input through a survey. Agencies could also participate in separate OMB working groups that focused on informing policy and guidance. For example, at the time of our review, an OMB working group was focusing on informing guidance for strategic planning required under GPRAMA.

Table 1: Active PIC Working Groups, as of April 2013

Group	Number of PIOs reporting agency participation ^a	Group description
Internal Agency Reviews	15	Focuses on sharing best practices for quarterly performance reviews. The group has produced a baseline study of the 24 CFO Act agencies' reviews. This study documented the status of the 24 CFO Act agencies' practices and identified areas for improvement and best practices to be shared.
Capability Building	12	Focuses on addressing GPRAMA requirements for OPM. The group has produced a toolkit for agencies to use in developing performance analyst positions.
Business Intelligence	10	Focuses on sharing tools for data analytics.

Sources: Information from OMB and the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), and GAO's survey of PIOs at the 24 CFO Act agencies.

^aThe total number of agencies participating in each working group may be higher than the numbers represented here. We drew this information from agencies responding to our survey. However, OMB staff told us that non-CFO Act agencies, who were not included in our survey, also participate in PIC working groups. In particular, OMB staff said that 21 agencies participate in the Internal Agency Reviews working group.

In addition to the three working groups described in table 1, there were two PIC working groups—the Goal Setting and the Benefits Processing working groups—that no longer regularly met, according to OMB staff. OMB and PIC staff said that these groups could restart again in the future, if agency needs arise. The Goal Setting working group focused on helping agencies set priority goals for fiscal year 2013, and produced a draft guide to goal setting. OMB staff said that the group may start meeting again to focus on strategic goals and objectives or on the next round of priority goal setting. In addition, the Benefits Processing working group, which focused on promoting consistency in agencies' benefits processing, was no longer regularly meeting because it had completed its tasks.

Most (18) PIOs we surveyed reported that they or other staff members from their agencies participated in at least one working group, with some agencies participating in multiple groups and one agency participating in all five. These 18 agencies participated in an average of three working groups each, according to PIOs. PIOs reported that they generally did not participate personally in working groups. At HHS, the Deputy PIO said that both he and members of his team participate in working groups. PIOs we surveyed and agency officials we interviewed reported using working group products or information. For example, a PIO reported on the survey that she used the Goal Setting group's guide on developing priority goals.

The PIC Coordinated with Small Agencies and Interagency Management Councils

According to representatives of small agencies, PIC and OMB staff effectively coordinated with them and were receptive to their feedback. GPRAMA directed the PIC to coordinate with nonmember agencies, which include most small agencies.⁴⁰ According to a representative of the Small Agency Council (SAC), a management association of small agencies, PIC meetings generally addressed issues affecting the CFO Act agencies. She said that she understood the PIC's focus, as larger agencies generally have more consistency in their implementation of GPRAMA requirements. However, she further stated that smaller agencies may require more assistance due to their more diverse missions and fewer resources. Although the broader PIC meetings were open to all agencies, the SAC representative told us that few small agencies found that the PIC met their needs. Instead, PIC and OMB staff communicated with small agencies through the SAC's Performance Improvement Committee, which was established in March 2011. This committee is similar to the PIC in its attention to implementation of GPRAMA, but meeting objectives focus on issues facing small agencies. According to SAC representatives, the committee functions as a way for small agencies to give voice to their concerns, as well as a forum for OMB and the PIC to focus on the needs of small agencies, which may have unique issues in implementing GPRAMA and other requirements. SAC representatives told us that they have been satisfied with the support provided by OMB and the PIC in both of these areas. SAC Performance Improvement Committee meeting agendas from recent months included presentations from PIC and OMB staff. For example, a recent meeting

⁴⁰The Small Agency Council defines a small agency as one having fewer than 6,000 full-time equivalent federal employees. The SAC's member agencies include some CFO Act agencies, but most of its member agencies are not CFO Act agencies.

included presentations from OMB staff on updated guidance contained in OMB's Circular A-11 and on small agencies' use of the performance.gov website.

In addition to coordinating with non-member agencies, GPRAMA directed the PIC to coordinate with other interagency management councils. While two PIOs we surveyed reported that this coordination was very helpful, most (16) rated this function as moderately helpful.

The PIC's Functions Are Established in GPRAMA and Guidance, but It Has Not Routinely Assessed its Performance

GPRAMA and OMB guidance specify the PIC's functions and roles, but the PIC has not regularly assessed how well it has been fulfilling these roles. GPRAMA directed the PIC to perform several functions, such as helping agencies share practices that have led to performance improvements. According to the PIC's Executive Director, the PIC conducted a survey of PIOs prior to the enactment of GPRAMA. It also surveyed attendees of a January 16, 2013, PIC meeting, one of the broader meetings that is open to PIOs as well as other agency staff. The survey covered topics such as participants' expectations for the meeting and assessments of the usefulness of the agenda items covered. However, the PIC has not done this on a regular basis, or gathered member feedback about its overall performance. As we have previously reported, practices that help to sustain collaboration include having federal agencies create the means to monitor and evaluate their collaborative efforts to enable them to identify areas for improvement.⁴¹ Although our survey indicated that PIOs generally found the PIC's work helpful in selected areas, without more comprehensive and regular assessment of member opinions, it will be difficult for the PIC to ensure that, going forward, it is meeting its members' current and emerging needs. The PIC's Executive Director, who started in this position in November 2012, told us that he was considering conducting a survey of PIC members as well as administering evaluation forms at the end of every meeting. Regularly soliciting feedback allows organizations to monitor member input on an ongoing basis. For example, the SAC Performance Improvement Committee administers an evaluation form at each of its meetings. These forms allow members to rate the usefulness of the meeting and their satisfaction with particular aspects of it and to suggest topics for upcoming meetings.

⁴¹[GAO-06-15](#).

Without formal and regular member feedback, the PIC is missing opportunities to tap a resource for identifying topics for future working groups and PIC meetings. PIC staff told us that identification of working group topics and meeting agenda items was generally based on informal input. Our review of PIC meeting agendas from February 2009 through September 2012 showed that since the enactment of GPRAMA in January 2011, both the “principals only” and broader PIC meetings focused on issues related to GPRAMA implementation. Going forward, PIC members’ needs will naturally evolve as GPRAMA implementation deepens within agencies and new questions and issues arise. The PIC’s Executive Director told us that the topic areas covered by the PIC in the future will most likely include new issues related to GPRAMA implementation, and an increased emphasis on cross-agency connections.

Additionally, the PIC has not updated its strategic plan since GPRAMA was enacted in January 2011. OMB staff provided us with a copy of the PIC’s Strategic Action Plan, which was implemented in January 2009 and covered fiscal years 2009 through 2013. This plan included four strategic goals, along with objectives and implementing strategies for each.⁴² OMB staff also provided us with information from a 2010 update of the strategic plan that focused on two new PIC goals.⁴³ As we have previously reported, practices that help ensure effective collaboration include the use of strategic plans as tools to drive collaboration and establish goals and strategies for achieving results.⁴⁴ Our prior work also identified several leading practices in federal strategic planning, among them that organizations involve stakeholders in strategic planning.⁴⁵ Although the PIC has a strategic plan in place, the PIC last updated the plan prior to

⁴²The strategic goals established in the plan were to ensure that: 1) performance information is integrated into policy and resource management decisions at all levels; 2) horizontal collaboration is used cross agency for effective and efficient performance in solving complex problems; 3) vertical collaboration is used throughout organizations to apply performance information to improve results; and 4) full accountability for achieving results at all levels of the federal government is transparent and demonstrated to the American people.

⁴³The two goals established in 2010 were focused on performance reporting and accelerating performance efforts.

⁴⁴[GAO-06-15](#).

⁴⁵GAO, *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act*, [GAO/GGD-96-118](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 1996).

the enactment of GPRAMA. An up-to-date strategic plan that incorporates the input of its members and reflects the changes in federal performance management required by GPRAMA could help the PIC be reasonably assured that it has established a framework to effectively guide and assess its work. The PIC's Executive Director told us that he intended to work with the PIC to update the strategic plan, which will be informed by PIC member feedback.

Conclusions

Senior agency officials' commitment to and accountability for improving performance are important factors in determining the success of performance and management improvement initiatives. Through our PIO survey, we found that officials with responsibilities under GPRAMA were greatly involved in central, key aspects of performance management. These officials were supported by performance management staff, and PIOs reported that they were generally satisfied with their staff skills. However, our survey results showed that PIOs believed that certain competencies could be strengthened. OPM planned to directly assess performance management competency gaps at agencies, but has not yet done so. An assessment directly focused on performance management competencies could provide information on any gaps and inform agencies' efforts to address them. OPM could also use this information to ensure that its work with agencies to incorporate competencies into training for agency staff, as required by GPRAMA, is effective. In particular, this information could inform OPM's coordination of the sharing of training resources among agencies, both through its *Training and Development Policy Wiki* website and the website planned for performance management professionals. Through these websites, OPM could target resources to areas in which it has identified competency gaps. Such sharing of agency training resources offers the opportunity to maximize efficiency, and OPM is well positioned to play a coordinating role in this area through its expertise and relationships with the PIC and CLO Council. OPM has worked with these councils related to training under GPRAMA in the past. Additionally, the councils include representatives from across government with expertise in performance management and training, so they provide OPM with the ability to efficiently obtain input and share resources on performance management training.

The PIC plays a significant role in agency implementation of GPRAMA, and our survey results indicate that PIOs generally found the PIC helpful to their agencies. Both GPRAMA and related OMB guidance described the PIC's functions, but the PIC has not regularly collected member

feedback on its own performance, and has not updated its strategic plan since GPRAMA was enacted in January 2011. Functions such as creating working groups and developing meeting agendas have been based on informal feedback. Regularly collecting formal feedback from members, such as through a survey, would help the PIC identify areas in which it could ensure it maintains its usefulness, as well as new areas on which member agencies would like for it to focus its meetings and working groups. Obtaining such feedback would allow the PIC to monitor its performance and identify issues as they arise. This will be particularly important as agencies become more accustomed to GPRAMA processes and their needs change. In addition, the PIC lacks an up-to-date strategic plan. Its most recent update was in 2010, so it does not reflect any changes in goals or priorities that may have resulted from GPRAMA. An up-to-date plan could provide the PIC with a basis for directing and evaluating its performance in implementing GPRAMA. A strategic plan that incorporates input from PIC members could also serve as a tool for encouraging collaboration and reinforcing accountability.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve performance management staff capacity to support performance management in federal agencies, we recommend that the Director of OPM, in coordination with the PIC and the CLO Council, work with agencies to take the following three actions:

- Identify competency areas needing improvement within agencies.
- Identify agency training that focuses on needed performance management competencies.
- Share information about available agency training on competency areas needing improvement.

To ensure that the PIC has a clear plan for accomplishing its goals and evaluating its progress, we recommend that the Director of OMB work with the PIC to take the following two actions:

- Conduct formal feedback on the performance of the PIC from member agencies, on an ongoing basis.
- Update its strategic plan and review the PIC's goals, measures, and strategies for achieving performance, and revise them if appropriate.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Acting Director of OMB, Director of OPM, Secretary of HHS, and Director of NSF for review and comment. OMB staff agreed with our recommendation that it work with the PIC to conduct regular feedback on the PIC's performance, and update the PIC's strategic plan and review the PIC's goals, measures, and strategies for achieving performance. The staff also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate. OPM agreed with our recommendation that it identify competency areas needing improvement in agencies, and use this information to identify and share information about training that focuses on needed performance management competencies. OPM explained that it will work with agencies, and in particular with PIOs, to assess the competencies of the performance management workforce. OPM also stated that it will support the use of the PIC's performance learning website to facilitate the identification and sharing of training related to competencies in need of improvement. OPM's written comments are reprinted in appendix V.

HHS did not have comments. NSF provided technical comments, which we incorporated.

We are sending copies of this report to the Acting Directors of OMB, OPM, and NSF, and the Secretary of HHS, as well as the appropriate congressional committees and other interested parties. In addition, this report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff members have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.



J. Christopher Mihm
Managing Director, Strategic Issues

List of Congressional Addressees

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Chairman
Task Force on Government Performance, Committee on the Budget
United States Senate

Appendix I: Agencies Subject to the Chief Financial Officers Act

Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Education
Department of Energy
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of the Interior
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
Department of State
Department of Transportation
Department of the Treasury
Department of Veterans Affairs
Environmental Protection Agency
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Agency for International Development
General Services Administration
National Science Foundation
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Personnel Management
Small Business Administration
Social Security Administration

Appendix II: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) requires GAO to review the act's implementation, and this report is part of a series of reviews planned around the requirement. The objectives of this report are to (1) examine the status of federal agency implementation of the performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA; and (2) evaluate the role of the PIC in facilitating the exchange of best practices and improving program management and performance.

To achieve our objectives, we focused our review on the 24 agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 (CFO Act).¹ Several provisions of GPRAMA apply specifically to these agencies, including that the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) include them as members. We focused our examination of performance management leadership on the management roles that have specific responsibilities under GPRAMA and related OMB guidance, with the exception of agency head. These are the chief operating officer (COO), performance improvement officer (PIO), deputy PIO, priority goal leader, and deputy goal leader. In looking at the PIC, we evaluated its role in facilitating the exchange of best practices and improving agency program management and performance. GPRAMA and related OMB guidance charge the PIC with performing several additional functions, such as supporting OMB in implementing requirements related to federal government priority goals, also referred to as cross-agency priority goals. We did not include these other functions in our review.

To address both objectives, we conducted a survey of PIOs at the 24 CFO Act agencies. Through our survey, we collected information regarding PIOs' and other key officials' characteristics, their involvement in performance management under GPRAMA, and PIO and agency participation in the PIC. Appendix IV presents the survey questions we asked, and summarizes the responses we received. We received responses from all 24 PIOs (a 100 percent response rate). Selected results from our survey were also reported in another GAO report that focused on quarterly performance reviews under GPRAMA.² We administered the web-based survey from October 18, 2012 to December 14, 2012. Respondents were sent an e-mail invitation to complete the

¹The CFO Act agencies are the executive branch agencies listed at 31 U.S.C. § 901(b). See appendix I for a full list of agencies surveyed.

²[GAO-13-228](#).

survey on a GAO web server using a unique username and password. During the data collection period, we sent reminder e-mails and made phone calls to nonresponding agencies. Because this was not a sample survey, it has no sampling errors. The practical difficulties of conducting any survey may also introduce nonsampling errors, such as difficulties interpreting a particular question, which can introduce unwanted variability into the survey results. We took steps to minimize nonsampling errors by pretesting the questionnaire in person with PIOs and deputy PIOs at three different agencies. We conducted these pretests to make sure that the questions were clear and unbiased, the data and information were readily obtainable, and that the questionnaire did not place an undue burden on respondents. Additionally, a senior methodologist within our office independently reviewed a draft of the questionnaire prior to its administration. We made appropriate revisions to the content and format of the questionnaire after the pretests and independent review. All data analysis programs used to generate survey results were independently verified for accuracy. Additionally, in reviewing the answers from agencies, we confirmed that PIOs had correctly bypassed inapplicable questions (skip patterns). Based on our findings, we determined that the survey data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

In addition, in order to understand GPRAMA implementation in more detail and put survey results in context for both objectives, we conducted in-depth studies of two agencies' implementation of performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA and participation in the PIC—the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). We selected these two agencies because they have differing characteristics that may affect implementation, such as agency size and the career status of the official in the PIO role. HHS is a relatively large agency when ranked according to annual budget and number of staff, while NSF is a relatively small agency. Additionally, HHS's PIO is a political appointee, while NSF's PIO is a career civil servant. In making our selection, we excluded agencies with certain characteristics, including those with a PIO that was relatively new to the role at the time of our survey and agencies that had been the subject of recent case studies on performance management by us or

other organizations.³ We conducted interviews with both selected agencies' COOs, PIOs, and deputy PIOs.

In addition, in order to understand the priority goal leader role and its contributions to performance management, we selected three of HHS's six priority goals and two of NSF's three priority goals and interviewed the responsible goal leaders. We selected these goals on the basis of several characteristics that may affect their management. These include: (1) number of priority goal leaders—we selected some goals with one leader and some with multiple leaders; (2) number of agency components involved in the goal—we selected goals with varying numbers of components and other stakeholders involved; (3) type of goal—we selected some process goals and some outcome goals; and (4) relationship to cross-agency priority goals—we included one goal in our set that relates to a cross-agency priority goal. The three goals we selected for HHS were: (1) improve the quality of early childhood education; (2) improve patient safety; and (3) reduce cigarette smoking. The two goals we selected for NSF were: (1) develop a diverse and highly qualified science and technology workforce; and (2) increase opportunities for research and education through public access to high-value digital products of NSF-funded research.⁴ For priority goals in which two leaders were assigned, we interviewed one of the responsible leaders. In several cases, deputy/ lieutenant goal leaders also attended the interviews.⁵

We also addressed our first objective by reviewing GPRAMA and OMB guidance related to the key management roles. We reviewed information provided to us by OMB on the officials in the roles, along with information on them that is publically available through OMB's performance.gov website and agency websites. We also interviewed OMB staff and officials at OPM about their work under GPRAMA, including their work with agencies in implementing GPRAMA. To understand agencies'

³We considered any PIO who did not have the position as of March 22, 2012 (the date that OMB published a list of agency PIOs) as being "new" to the position.

⁴After our interviews were completed, leadership for NSF's Access to Digital Products priority goal changed. Specifically, it moved from the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences to the Division of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure in the Directorate for Computer and Information Sciences.

⁵ For the HHS goals, performance officers attended the interviews as well.

perspectives and experiences in implementing the performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA, we analyzed relevant results from our survey of PIOs and included related questions in our interviews with officials at HHS and NSF. We also obtained relevant documentation, such as meeting agendas, from these two agencies.

To address our second objective, we reviewed GPRAMA and related OMB guidance on the PIC. We analyzed PIC meeting agendas from February 2009 through September 2012, and we observed part of the September 12, 2012, PIC meeting. We also reviewed documents related to the PIC and its working groups and website, and interviewed OMB and PIC staff. We also interviewed OPM officials about their work with the PIC. To understand agencies' participation in and use of the PIC, we analyzed relevant results from our survey of PIOs and included related questions in our interviews with officials at HHS and NSF. We also interviewed the PIC's Executive Director, and officials from the Small Agency Council and the chair of its Performance Improvement Committee, which interacts with the PIC.

We conducted our work from May 2012 to April 2013 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix III: Core Competencies for Performance Management Staff

In a January 2012 memorandum, OPM's Director identified 15 competencies that are essential for performance management staff to have in order to perform their roles.¹ The memorandum included the following definitions of each competency.

Accountability - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.

Attention to Detail - Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.

Customer Service - Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.

Influencing/Negotiating - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

Information Management - Identifies a need for and knows where or how to gather information; organizes and maintains information or information management systems.

Oral Communication - Expresses information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.

Organizational Awareness - Knows the organization's mission and functions, and how its social, political, and technological systems work

¹OPM, *Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers: Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 Functional Competencies* (January 3, 2012).

and operates effectively within them; this includes the programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the organization.

Organizational Performance Analysis - Knowledge of the methods, techniques, and tools used to analyze program, organizational, and mission performance; includes methods that deliver key performance information (for example, comparative, trend, diagnostic, root cause, predictive) used to inform decisions, actions, communications, and accountability systems.

Partnering - Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

Performance Measurement - Knowledge of the principles and methods for evaluating program or organizational performance using financial and nonfinancial measures, including identification of evaluation factors (for example, workload, personnel requirements), metrics, and outcomes.

Planning and Evaluating - Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.

Problem Solving - Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.

Reasoning - Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or draws accurate conclusions.

Technical Competence - Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to the job; advises others on technical issues.

Written Communication - Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Appendix IV: Results from Survey of Performance Improvement Officers

Introduction

The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA), enacted in January 2011, modifies the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. GAO has been mandated to review the implementation of GPRAMA. As a part of this mandate, GAO is reviewing the status of agency implementation of the performance management positions and responsibilities under GPRAMA, examining the role that the Performance Improvement Council plays in helping agencies implement performance management activities, and assessing the status of agency implementation of quarterly performance reviews. To address these questions, we are surveying Performance Improvement Officers (PIOs) in the 24 agencies covered by Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990.

Most of the questions in this survey can be answered by checking boxes or filling in blanks. The survey should take no more than 45 minutes to complete. You do not need to complete the survey in one sitting, as the survey will allow you at any point to save your responses so that you can log in again and complete the rest of it at a later time. To learn more about completing the questionnaire, printing your responses, and whom to contact if you have questions, [click here](#).

The results of this survey generally will be provided in summary form in a GAO report. Individual answers may be discussed in our reporting, but we will not include any information that could be used to identify individuals' or agencies' names. We will not release individually identifiable data outside of GAO, unless compelled by law or requested by the Congress.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Performance Improvement Officer (You and Your Role)

Please note: Please provide what you personally believe is the most correct answer to each question, even if it is different from the opinions of others at your agency.

1. Besides Performance Improvement Officer (PIO), what other title(s), if any, do you have (e.g. CFO)?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

2. When did you start serving in the position(s) you identified in Question 1?

2009 or earlier	2010	2011	2012	Number of respondents
9	6	6	3	24

3. Which of the following best describes your hiring status?

Career civil servant	Political appointee	Number of respondents
13	11	24

4. Who do you report to in the role(s) you identified in Question 1? (check all that apply)

1. Agency Head

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
13	11	24

2. Deputy Secretary

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
15	9	24

3. Other(s)

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
16	8	24

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4a. If other, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

5. When did you start serving as PIO at your agency?

2009 or earlier	2010	2011	2012	Number of respondents
6	2	9	7	24

**6. Who do you report to in your role as PIO?
(check all that apply)**

1. Chief Operating Officer (i.e. Deputy Secretary or equivalent)

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
2	22	24

2. Other(s)

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
21	3	24

6a. If other, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

7. How many PIOs has your agency had (including yourself) since GPRAMA was enacted in January 2011?

1 PIO	2 PIOs	3 PIOs	4 PIOs	Number of respondents
15	6	2	1	24

8. On average, how much time per month do you spend performing duties related to your role as PIO?

All of my time	Most of my time	About half of my time	Some of my time	Very little of my time	No opinion	Number of respondents
1	0	7	14	2	0	24

**9. How do your other role(s) besides PIO affect your ability to perform your duties as a PIO?
(check all that apply)**

1. My other role(s) prevent me from spending enough time on the PIO role

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
22	2	24

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2. My other role(s) give me knowledge/experience that is helpful to the PIO role

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
4	20	24

3. My other role(s) give me authority/access that is helpful to the PIO role

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
3	21	24

4. Other(s)

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

5. None of the above

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

6. Not applicable

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

9a. If other, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

10. Do each of the following factors help or hinder your ability to perform your duties as a PIO?

10a. Your level of access to agency leadership

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
24	0	0	0	0	24

10b. Your level of authority

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
23	0	1	0	0	24

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10c. Number of staff directly supporting performance management

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
16	3	5	0	0	24

10d. Level of staff skills/ competencies to perform required performance analysis

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
18	3	3	0	0	24

10e. Level of access/ availability of training related to analysis and performance management

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
9	11	2	2	0	24

10f. Level of access to performance information

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
17	2	4	1	0	24

10g. Turnover of PIOs

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
0	7	0	2	15	24

10h. Turnover of deputy PIOs

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
0	6	0	1	17	24

10i. Other factor #1

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
3	0	5	0	2	10

10j. Other factor #2

Helps	Neither helps nor hinders	Hinders	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
0	0	2	0	2	4

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If other factors specified in question 10, what was each additional factor?

Other factor #1

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Other factor #2

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

11. To what extent, if at all, are PIO responsibilities considered in your annual performance expectations and appraisals?

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Not applicable - no annual performance expectations or appraisals	Number of respondents
5	16	2	0	0	1	24

12. What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the effectiveness of the PIO role?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Deputy Performance Improvement Officer(s)

13. Does your agency have a Deputy Performance Improvement Officer(s)?

Yes - we have 1 Deputy Performance Improvement Officer	Yes - we have 2 Deputy Performance Improvement Officers	No	Number of respondents
20	2	2	24

14. When was the Deputy Performance Improvement Officer position created at your agency?

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Number of respondents
2	2	3	3	10	2	22

15. How many Deputy PIOs has your agency had (including the current person in that position) since GPRAMA was enacted in January 2011?

1	2	Number of respondents
14	8	22

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16. What other title(s), if any, does each Deputy Performance Improvement Officer have?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

17. Who does each Deputy Performance Improvement Officer report to in the role(s) identified in question 16?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

18. On average, how much time per month does each Deputy PIO spend performing duties related to his/her role as PIO?

All of his/her time	Most of his/her time	About half of his/her time	Some of his/her time	Very little of his/her time	No opinion	Number of DPIOs Listed by Agencies
5	5	5	8	1	0	24

19. When did the Deputy Performance Improvement Officer start in his/her position?

2009 or earlier	2010	2011	2012	Number of DPIOs Listed by Agencies
7	0	8	9	24

20. To what extent, if at all, are Deputy PIO responsibilities specifically considered in his/her annual performance expectations and appraisals?

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Not applicable - no annual performance expectations or appraisals	Number of Deputy PIOs
14	5	4	0	0	1	24

21. What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving the effectiveness of the Deputy PIO role?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Performance Improvement Staff

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is responsible under GPRAMA for identifying the skills and competencies needed by government personnel for goal-setting, evaluation, and analysis. Additionally, the agency is required to incorporate these skills and competencies into relevant position classifications and agency training. The following questions relate to the 15 competencies OPM identified for performance improvement staff.

22. To what extent does your performance improvement staff have each of the following competencies that OPM has identified? For explanations of competencies, click here.¹

22a. Accountability

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
18	5	1	0	0	24

22b. Attention to Detail

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
20	4	0	0	0	24

22c. Customer Service

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
19	3	2	0	0	24

22d. Influencing/ Negotiating

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
17	5	2	0	0	24

22e. Information Management

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
14	8	2	0	0	24

¹ See Appendix IV for explanations of competencies.

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22f. Oral Communication

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
21	3	0	0	0	24

22g. Organizational Awareness

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
20	4	0	0	0	24

22h. Organizational Performance Analysis

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
14	8	2	0	0	24

22i. Partnering

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
19	4	1	0	0	24

22j. Performance Measurement

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
15	7	2	0	0	24

22k. Planning and Evaluating

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
13	8	3	0	0	24

22l. Problem Solving

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
20	2	2	0	0	24

22m. Reasoning

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
21	3	0	0	0	24

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22n. Technical Competence

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
19	3	1	1	0	24

22o. Written Communication

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
21	3	0	0	0	24

23. What are your plans, if any, to strengthen staff competencies?

Hire new staff	Train existing staff	Hire new staff and train existing staff	Not applicable - all competencies are sufficiently available	Not applicable - competencies are not sufficiently available, but no action is planned	Other	Number of respondents
0	7	11	3	1	2	24

23a. If other, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Agency Performance Management Roles and Responsibilities

GPRAMA provides senior agency officials with specific duties and responsibilities related to performance management and achievement of performance goals. The key agency officials identified in the Act are Agency Head, Chief Operating Officer (COO) who is the Deputy Secretary or equivalent position; Performance Improvement Officer (PIO); and Goal Leader. Later guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directs agencies that have a political appointee serving as the PIO to appoint a career senior executive to serve as Deputy PIO. The following questions address these roles and their responsibilities at your agency.

24. How much involvement, if any, does each of the following officials have in strategic and performance planning and goal setting?

24a. Agency Head

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
12	10	2	0	0	0	24

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24b. Chief Operating Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
18	5	0	0	1	0	24

24c. Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
20	4	0	0	0	0	24

24d. Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
17	4	1	0	0	2	24

24e. Goal Leaders

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
19	5	0	0	0	0	24

25. How much involvement, if any, does each of the following officials have in performance measurement and analysis?

25a. Agency Head

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
4	7	11	1	0	1	24

25b. Chief Operating Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
9	12	3	0	0	0	24

25c. Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
17	5	2	0	0	0	24

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25d. Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
18	3	1	0	0	2	24

25e. Goal Leaders

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
20	3	1	0	0	0	24

26. How much involvement, if any, does each of the following officials have in communicating agency progress toward goals, both internally and externally?

26a. Agency Head

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
10	11	3	0	0	0	24

26b. Chief Operating Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
14	9	1	0	0	0	24

26c. Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
20	4	0	0	0	0	24

26d. Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
14	7	1	0	0	2	24

26e. Goal Leaders

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
16	6	1	0	1	0	24

Quarterly Performance Reviews

As of June 2011, GPRAMA required agencies to review progress toward its priority goals on at least a quarterly basis. The quarterly performance reviews are to involve key leadership and other relevant parties and should, at minimum, focus on the agency's priority goals. They are to include reviewing progress and trends, coordinating within and outside the agency, assessing agencies', activities', and policies' contributions to goals, categorizing goals by risk, and identifying strategies for improvement.

When we refer to "quarterly performance reviews" in the following questions, we refer to all aspects of the regularly-scheduled reviews required under GPRAMA, including preparation, review, and follow-up. Some agencies refer to these reviews as "stat" reviews. Additionally, although we refer to them as "quarterly performance reviews," agencies may conduct these reviews on a regularly occurring basis more frequently than quarterly.

27. Does your agency conduct GPRAMA-required quarterly performance reviews?

Yes	No	Number of respondents
24	0	24

28. Did your agency conduct quarterly performance reviews (or similar reviews) before the GPRAMA requirement took effect in June 2011?

Yes	No	Number of respondents
20	4	24

29. When did your agency begin conducting quarterly reviews?

2007 or earlier	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Number of respondents ¹
9	0	4	5	3	1	22

¹Two PIOs did not respond to this question.

30. How does your agency conduct its quarterly performance reviews?

Meetings	Written communication	Both	Number of respondents
10	0	14	24

31. How often does your agency conduct performance reviews (although GPRAMA requires quarterly reviews, some agencies have established other review cycles to meet their management needs)?

Less often than quarterly	Quarterly	More often than quarterly	Number of respondents
0	17	7	24

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31a. How often?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

32. How much involvement, if any, does each of the following officials have in your agency's quarterly performance reviews?

32a. Agency Head

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
4	5	9	6	0	0	24

32b. Chief Operating Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
21	2	1	0	0	0	24

32c. Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
23	1	0	0	0	0	24

32d. Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
20	1	1	0	0	2	24

32e. Goal Leaders

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
19	2	3	0	0	0	24

32f. Management Chiefs

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
15	8	1	0	0	0	24

32g. Internal-to-agency contributors to goals

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
15	7	2	0	0	0	24

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32h. External-to-agency contributors to goals

Large involvement	Moderate involvement	Small involvement	No involvement	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
1	3	9	7	0	4	24

33. For each of the following officials, has their involvement in agency performance management increased, remained about the same, or decreased as a result of your agency's quarterly performance reviews?

33a. Agency Head

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
2	19	0	2	1	24

33b. Chief Operating Officer

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents ¹
15	6	0	2	0	23

¹One PIO did not respond to this question.

33c. Performance Improvement Officer

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
16	7	0	1	0	24

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33d. Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
11	10	0	1	2	24

33e. Goal Leaders

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
13	10	0	1	0	24

33f. Management Chiefs

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
8	14	0	1	1	24

33g. Internal-to-agency contributors to goals

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
9	14	0	1	0	24

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33h. External-to-agency contributors to goals

Increased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Remained about the same as a result of quarterly performance reviews	Decreased as a result of quarterly performance reviews	No opinion	Not applicable	Number of respondents
0	9	1	3	11	24

34. How frequently do your agency's quarterly performance reviews include the following characteristics?

34a. Reviews include information on progress and trends relevant to achievement of priority goals

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
23	1	0	0	24

34b. Reviews include coordination with personnel inside and outside agency, as relevant to achievement of priority goals

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
16	4	3	1	24

34c. Reviews include assessment of whether relevant organizations, programs, regulations, policies, etc. are contributing as planned toward goals

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
20	2	2	0	24

34d. Reviews include assessment of risk of not achieving priority goals and for the highest-risk goals

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
18	4	2	0	24

34e. Reviews include discussion of strategies for performance improvement

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
19	5	0	0	24

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35. How frequently do your agency's quarterly performance reviews include the following characteristics or practices and how easy or challenging has it been to implement them?

35a. Frequency: Accurate, timely, and useful data is available for the reviews

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
18	6	0	0	24

35a. Challenge: Accurate, timely, and useful data is available for the reviews

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
2	6	16	0	24

35b. Frequency: Participants are adequately prepared for the reviews

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
22	1	1	0	24

35b. Challenge: Participants are adequately prepared for the reviews

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
5	15	4	0	24

35c. Frequency: Reviews are held routinely as scheduled

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
20	3	1	0	24

35c. Challenge: Reviews are held routinely as scheduled

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
10	8	6	0	24

35d. Frequency: Reviews are aligned with strategic goals and performance objectives

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
22	1	1	0	24

35d. Challenge: Reviews are aligned with strategic goals and performance objectives

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
13	9	1	1	24

35e. Frequency: Leadership actively participates in the reviews

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents ¹
22	1	0	0	23

¹One PIO did not respond to this question.

35e. Challenge: Leadership actively participates in the reviews

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents ¹
12	8	2	1	23

¹One PIO did not respond to this question.

35f. Frequency: Reviews include those managers/staff needed to facilitate problem solving and identify improvement opportunities

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
21	3	0	0	24

35f. Challenge: Reviews include those managers/staff needed to facilitate problem solving and identify improvement opportunities

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
10	12	2	0	24

35g. Frequency: Data and relevant analyses are presented effectively to participants of the reviews

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
16	6	1	1	24

**Appendix IV: Results from Survey of
Performance Improvement Officers**

35g. Challenge: Data and relevant analyses are presented effectively to participants of the reviews

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
2	10	11	1	24

35h. Frequency: Reviews strike a balance between motivating improvement and holding participants accountable

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
17	5	0	2	24

35h. Challenge: Reviews strike a balance between motivating improvement and holding participants accountable

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
4	12	6	2	24

35i. Frequency: Actionable opportunities for performance improvement are identified through the reviews

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
13	8	3	0	24

35i. Challenge: Actionable opportunities for performance improvement are identified through the reviews

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
6	11	5	2	24

35j. Frequency: Follow up takes place after the reviews so that all action items arising from reviews are addressed

More than half the time	About half the time	Less than half the time	No opinion	Number of respondents
21	2	1	0	24

35j. Challenge: Follow up takes place after the reviews so that all action items arising from reviews are addressed

Easy	Neither easy nor challenging	Challenging	No opinion	Number of respondents
4	12	7	1	24

Performance Improvement Council

GPRAMA establishes in law the Performance Improvement Council (PIC). The PIC is an interagency council made up of agency PIOs that is charged with assisting OMB with topics related to GPRAMA and facilitating the exchange of useful practices among agencies.

36. How often do you attend the every-other-month Performance Improvement Council meetings that are for PIOs only (not deputies or staff)?

Attend all or nearly all meetings	Attend more than half of meetings	Attend about half of meetings	Attend less than half of meetings	Rarely or never attend meetings	Number of respondents
15	3	2	2	2	24

37. How often do you attend the every-other-month Performance Improvement Council meetings that are open to PIOs, Deputy PIOs, and staff?

Attend all or nearly all meetings	Attend more than half of meetings	Attend about half of meetings	Attend less than half of meetings	Rarely or never attend meetings	Number of respondents
5	1	2	4	12	24

38. How often does a Deputy PIO or another representative(s) from your agency attend the every-other-month Performance Improvement Council meetings that are open to PIOs, Deputy PIOs, and staff?

Attend all or nearly all meetings	Attend more than half of meetings	Attend about half of meetings	Attend less than half of meetings	Rarely or never attend meetings	Number of respondents
22	0	1	0	1	24

39. Which of the following working groups of the Performance Improvement Council do/did you actively participate in personally as the PIO? (check all that apply)

1. Capability Building working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

2. Goal Setting working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

**Appendix IV: Results from Survey of
Performance Improvement Officers**

3. Internal Agency Reviews working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
22	2	24

4. Benefits Processing working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
23	1	24

5. Business Intelligence working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
23	1	24

6. I do not personally participate in any working groups

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
3	21	24

7. Other

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
24	0	24

39a. If other working group, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

40. In which of the following working groups of the Performance Improvement Council do/did other representatives from your agency actively participate? (check all that apply)

1. *Capability Building working group*

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
12	12	24

2. Goal Setting working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
15	9	24

**Appendix IV: Results from Survey of
Performance Improvement Officers**

3. Internal Agency Reviews working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
10	14	24

4. Benefits Processing working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
20	4	24

5. Business Intelligence working group

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
15	9	24

6. Other

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
18	6	24

7. None

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
20	4	24

8. Do not know

Not checked	Checked	Number of respondents
21	3	24

40a. If other working group, please specify:

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

41. GPRAMA and OMB guidance identify the following responsibilities of the Performance Improvement Council. How helpful have the following aspects been to your agency?

41a. Resolving cross-cutting performance issues as needed

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
3	11	5	5	24

**Appendix IV: Results from Survey of
Performance Improvement Officers**

41b. Facilitating the exchange of successful practices among agencies

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
14	8	1	1	24

41c. Coordinating with other interagency management councils

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
2	16	3	3	24

41d. Seeking advice and information from nonmember agencies, particularly smaller agencies

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
3	7	1	13	24

41e. Considering models from corporations, nonprofits, other governments, unions, etc.

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
4	10	1	9	24

41f. Submitting recommendations to streamline performance management policies and requirements to OMB

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
7	10	4	3	24

41g. Developing and providing tips, tools, training, and other capacity-building mechanisms

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
12	9	1	2	24

41h. Other aspect #1

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
0	0	1	1	2

41i. Other aspect #2

Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Not Helpful	No opinion	Number of respondents
0	0	0	1	1

If other aspect(s) specified in question 41, what was each additional aspect?

Other aspect #1

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Other aspect #2

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

42. To what extent are you able to apply successful practices and other information and tools shared by the PIC to your agency's performance management?

Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	No extent	No opinion	Number of respondents
2	9	6	0	7	24

42a. Please provide an example or examples of case(s) in which you have applied successful practices and other information and tools shared by the PIC in your agency.

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

43. What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of the PIC, if any?

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

44. Please provide any comments that would expand upon your responses to any of the questions in the survey.

Data for this question is intentionally not reported because it is difficult to summarize and/or could identify respondents.

Appendix V: Comments from the Office of Personnel Management



Planning and Policy
Analysis

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

MAR 28 2013

Mr. J. Christopher Mihm
Managing Director
Strategic Issues
United States General Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Mihm:

Thank you for providing the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) the opportunity to comment on the Government Accountability Office draft report "Managing for Results: Agencies Have Elevated Performance Management Roles, but Additional Training is Needed (GAO-13-356)." We are in concurrence with the finding and recommendation identified in the report. Please find our responses below.

Recommendation: To improve performance management staff capacity to support performance management in Federal agencies, we recommend that the Director of OPM, in coordination with the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) and the Chief Learning Officers (CLO) Council, work with agencies to take the following three actions:

- Identify competency areas needing improvement within agencies;

OPM concurs with this recommendation; however, OPM does not have the resources to conduct a Government-wide competency assessment. OPM and the PIC will work with agencies, in particular the Performance Improvement Officers, to assess the competencies of the performance management workforce and those they work with to manage and improve mission performance. Once those assessments are completed, agencies may work with their respective CLOs to identify or develop necessary training to close any competency gaps. The PIC may also consult with the CLO Council to determine if common needs training exists or if there is a need to design and develop such training.

- Identify agency training that focuses on needed performance management competencies; and

OPM is supporting the PIC's performance learning website. The website is modeled after HR University (<http://www.hru.gov/>), where agencies will identify and post existing performance training and other learning opportunities to the learning website. The PIC has established a learning website advisory group consisting of agency performance representatives. This group will advise the PIC

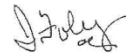
on the development and implementation of the website, including the identification of priorities for the first version of the website. The website is scheduled to launch in the fall of 2013.

- Share information about available agency training on competency areas needing improvement.

Once launched, the learning website will be available to all Government performance management staff as well as those working in mission areas to manage and improve mission performance. The learning website will enable agencies to share training and information across Government, resulting in a reduction of duplicated efforts. The website will allow the PIC to track the demand for performance training and fill gaps with existing training from agencies and vendors as available and appropriate.

Again, we thank you for providing us the opportunity to review and respond to the draft report.

Sincerely,



Jonathan R. Foley
Director, Planning and Policy Analysis

Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

J. Christopher Mihm, (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgements

In addition to the contact named above, Sarah Veale, Assistant Director, and Kathleen Padulchick, Analyst-in-Charge, supervised the development of this report. Virginia Chanley, Lois Hanshaw, Linda Kohn, Jill Lacey, Albert Sim, and Meredith Trauner made significant contributions to all aspects of this report.

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