



Highlights of GAO-10-254, a report to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

To sustain a viable military force, the Department of Defense (DOD) depends on recruiting several hundred thousand qualified individuals into the military each year. The service components rely on their recruiters to act with the utmost integrity because even a single incident of wrongdoing on the part of a recruiter—a recruiter irregularity—can adversely affect the service components' ability to recruit qualified individuals. GAO was asked to (1) analyze data on reported cases of recruiter irregularities across the service components, (2) review the extent to which the service components have guidance and procedures to address recruiter irregularities, and (3) review the extent to which the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has oversight over recruiter irregularities. GAO analyzed the data on recruiter irregularities reported to OSD by the service components; reviewed the service components' recruiter irregularity case files; examined relevant guidance and procedures from the service components; and interviewed service components' recruiting command personnel, recruiters, and OSD officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making several recommendations to improve the service components' sharing of recruiter irregularity data, the clarity of OSD's reporting guidance, and the transparency of the data reported to OSD. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations.

[View GAO-10-254 or key components.](#)
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MILITARY RECRUITING

Clarified Reporting Requirements and Increased Transparency Could Strengthen Oversight over Recruiter Irregularities

What GAO Found

From fiscal year 2006 through 2008, the total number of substantiated cases of recruiter irregularities across the service components represented a small percentage of overall accessions (i.e., number of individuals entering military service), and the service components have taken various actions against the recruiters responsible for these irregularities. Specifically, the number of substantiated cases of recruiter irregularities as a percentage of overall accessions was 0.26 percent in fiscal year 2006, 0.22 percent in fiscal year 2007, and 0.18 percent in fiscal year 2008. The most common types of recruiter irregularity reported involved concealment or falsification of documents or information, sexual misconduct, and quality control measures (e.g., valid parental signatures). The action most commonly applied against recruiters who committed irregularities varied by service component. Removal from recruiting was the most commonly applied action in the Marine Corps while adverse administrative action (e.g., a letter of reprimand in the recruiter's personnel file) was most commonly applied in the Army.

All service components have guidance and procedures on addressing recruiter irregularities and have improved oversight over them, but the manner in which data on recruiter irregularities are shared within the service components varied. Although some differences exist, the service components are similar in how they identify, investigate, and adjudicate recruiter irregularities. In addition, the service components have taken steps to identify and prevent recruiter irregularities, including establishing quality control checks to help identify recruiter irregularities and providing training for recruiters to help prevent recruiter irregularities. However, in most service components, not all levels of command have regular access to information on recruiter irregularities that occur. Without regular access to information, commanders may not be able to take full advantage of servicewide recruiter irregularity data and opportunities to learn from their peers.

Although OSD has implemented requirements for the service components to regularly report on recruiter irregularities, it does not have complete oversight over the recruiter irregularities that occur. In December 2006, OSD issued a memorandum for the service components on tracking and reporting recruiter irregularities, and the service components have been providing recruiter irregularity data to OSD. However, because some of the reporting requirements lack clarity, the service components do not interpret the reporting requirements in the same way. Further, the data provided to OSD by the National Guard are incomplete and the relevant offices within the National Guard Bureau do not provide appropriate caveats regarding these data, such as including information on the States and Territories that did not submit recruiter irregularity data. Unless OSD clarifies the reporting requirements in its memorandum and directs the service components to provide transparency in the data they report, it will be unable to maintain complete oversight over the extent to which recruiter irregularities are occurring and make determinations on whether corrective action is needed.