

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-69](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Technology companies are a major source of high-paying U.S. jobs, but some have questioned the sector's commitment to equal employment opportunity. EEOC provides federal oversight of nondiscrimination requirements by investigating charges of discrimination, and OFCCP enforces federal contractors' compliance with affirmative action requirements. GAO was asked to review workforce trends in the technology sector and federal oversight.

This report examines (1) trends in the gender, racial, and ethnic composition of the technology sector workforce; and (2) EEOC and OFCCP oversight of technology companies' compliance with equal employment and affirmative action requirements. GAO analyzed workforce data from the American Community Survey for 2005-2015 and EEOC Employer Information Reports for 2007-2015, the latest data available during our analysis. GAO analyzed OFCCP data on compliance evaluations for fiscal years 2011-2016. GAO interviewed agency officials, researchers, and workforce, industry, and company representatives.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO makes 6 recommendations, including that EEOC develop a timeline to improve industry data collection and OFCCP take steps toward requiring more specific minority placement goals by contractors and assess key aspects of its selection approach. EEOC neither agreed nor disagreed with its recommendation, and OFCCP stated the need for regulatory change to alter placement goal requirements. GAO continues to believe actions are needed, as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-18-69](#). For more information, contact Cindy Brown Barnes at (202) 512-7215 or [brownbarnesc@gao.gov](mailto:brownbarnesc@gao.gov).

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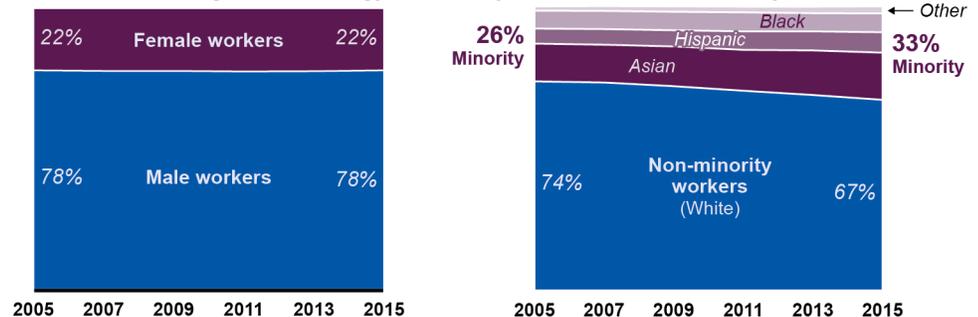
# DIVERSITY IN THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

## Federal Agencies Could Improve Oversight of Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

### What GAO Found

The estimated percentage of minority technology workers increased from 2005 to 2015, but GAO found that no growth occurred for female and Black workers, whereas Asian and Hispanic workers made statistically significant increases (see figure). Further, female, Black, and Hispanic workers remain a smaller proportion of the technology workforce—mathematics, computing, and engineering occupations—compared to their representation in the general workforce. These groups have also been less represented among technology workers inside the technology sector than outside it. In contrast, Asian workers were more represented in these occupations than in the general workforce. Stakeholders and researchers GAO interviewed identified several factors that may have contributed to the lower representation of certain groups, such as fewer women and minorities graduating with technical degrees and company hiring and retention practices.

Estimated Percentage of Technology Workers by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2005-2015



Source: GAO analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau. | GAO-18-69

Note: Changes from 2005 to 2015 were statistically significant at p-value <0.05 except for changes for female, male, and Black workers. All population estimates have Relative Standard Errors of less than 7 percent. "Other" includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, and "Two or More Races". White, Black, Asian, and "Other" categories include only non-Hispanic members.

Both the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) have taken steps to enforce equal employment and affirmative action requirements in the technology sector, but face limitations. While EEOC has identified barriers to recruitment and hiring in the technology sector as a strategic priority, when EEOC conducts investigations, it does not systematically record the type of industry, therefore limiting sector-related analyses to help focus its efforts. EEOC has plans to determine how to add missing industry codes but has not set a timeframe to do this. In addition, OFCCP's regulations may hinder its ability to enforce contractors' compliance because OFCCP directs contractors to set placement goals for all minorities as a group rather than for specific racial/ethnic groups. OFCCP also has not made changes to its establishment-based approach to selecting entities for review in decades, even though changes have occurred in how workplaces are structured. Without taking steps to address these issues, OFCCP may miss opportunities to hold contractors responsible for complying with affirmative action and nondiscrimination requirements.