

Highlights of [GAO-04-39](#), a report to congressional requesters

# HUMAN CAPITAL

## Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning

### Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government is in a period of profound transition and faces an array of challenges and opportunities to enhance performance, ensure accountability, and position the nation for the future. Effective results-oriented management of the government's most valued resource—its people—is at the heart of this transition.

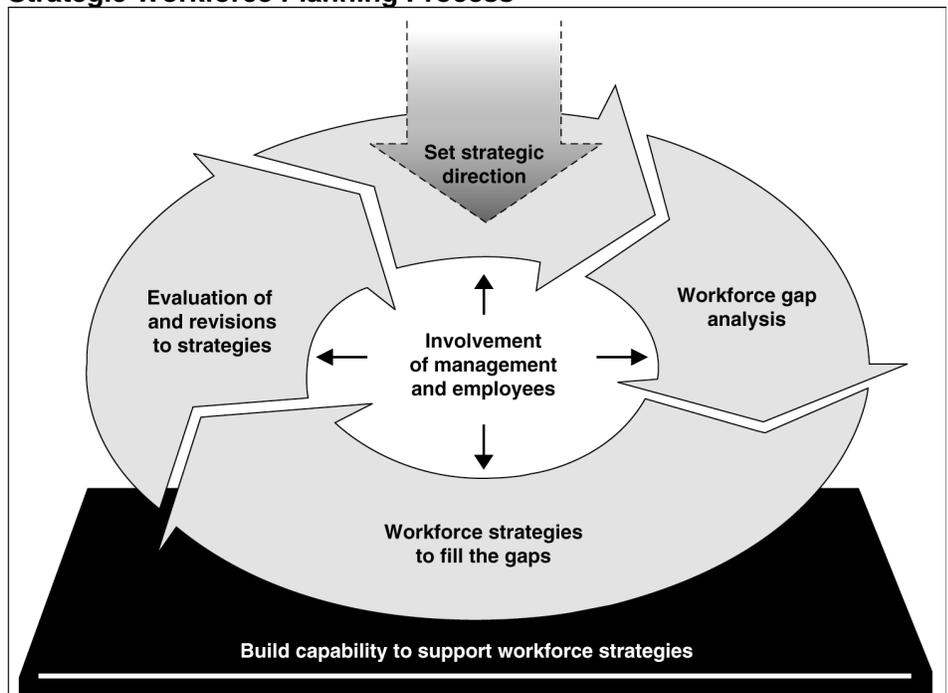
This report is part of a large body of GAO work examining issues in strategic human capital management. Based on GAO's reports and testimonies, review of studies by leading workforce planning organizations, and interviews with officials from the Office of Personnel Management and other federal agencies, this report describes the key principles of strategic workforce planning and provides illustrative examples of these principles drawn from selected agencies' strategic workforce planning experiences.

### What GAO Found

Strategic workforce planning addresses two critical needs: (1) aligning an organization's human capital program with its current and emerging mission and programmatic goals and (2) developing long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals. While agencies' approaches to workforce planning will vary, GAO identified five key principles that strategic workforce planning should address irrespective of the context in which the planning is done:

- Involve top management, employees, and other stakeholders in developing, communicating, and implementing the strategic workforce plan.
- Determine the critical skills and competencies that will be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results.
- Develop strategies that are tailored to address gaps in number, deployment, and alignment of human capital approaches for enabling and sustaining the contributions of all critical skills and competencies.
- Build the capability needed to address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce planning strategies.
- Monitor and evaluate the agency's progress toward its human capital goals and the contribution that human capital results have made toward achieving programmatic results.

### Strategic Workforce Planning Process



Source: GAO.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-39](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-39).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or [mihmj@gao.gov](mailto:mihmj@gao.gov).