

## Why GAO Did This Study

HUD has faced challenges accurately determining the staff resources it needs to fulfill its mission of creating strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. GAO's prior work has shown that strategic human capital management, including efficient and effective workforce planning, helps ensure agencies have people with the skills needed to carry out their missions. GAO was directed to review the status of HUD's workforce planning efforts. GAO reviewed (1) HUD's strategic human capital and workforce planning efforts; (2) the extent to which HUD's resource management systems reflects identified standards; and (3) how clearly HUD presents its rationale behind staff resource requests in the budget request. GAO reviewed department-wide human capital and resource management efforts and selected four of the largest HUD program offices for further review. GAO reviewed documentation of HUD planning efforts and interviewed HUD officials and relevant congressional staff. The results from the reviews of the four program offices cannot be generalized to all offices within HUD.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of HUD follow through on developing and maintaining human capital and workforce plans that clearly incorporate key principles; create incentives for staff to report accurate data for managing staff resources; and consult with congressional decision makers to determine what additional information about resource decisions should be presented, and how, in its CBJ. HUD agreed with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-13-282](#). For more information, contact Michelle Sager at (202) 512-6806 or [sagerm@gao.gov](mailto:sagerm@gao.gov).

## HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

### Strategic Human Capital and Workforce Planning Should be an Ongoing Priority

## What GAO Found

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reports that it is moving forward with strategic human capital and workforce planning efforts after several years of delays. HUD's most recent workforce plan expired in 2009 and since then HUD has launched several planning efforts. According to HUD, these efforts were preempted by other important priorities, such as responding to the economic crisis. HUD undertook initiatives such as training key program office staff on the need to determine up front the staff HUD could afford to hire. In HUD's latest effort, a contractor is expected to complete human capital and workforce plans no later than fiscal year 2014. In June 2012, an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) review found that HUD's human capital and workforce planning activities did not always follow key principles for planning, implementing, and evaluating the results of human capital management policies and practices. For example, the review found that HUD's human resources policies and programs are not aligned with the organization's mission, strategic goals, or performance outcomes. As a result of these weaknesses, OPM concluded that HUD cannot continually assess and improve human capital planning and investments or measure the impact on mission accomplishment.

HUD is reexamining its resource management processes, which do not fully consider all standards identified by the National Academy of Public Administration in a 1999 report on ways that HUD could address its resource management challenges. GAO's review found that HUD provides central guidance on how work is defined and collected, and involves headquarters and field staff in the workload definition process. However, HUD has not created incentives or accountability for staff to report accurate workload data. GAO found that HUD's program offices selectively use the department's resource estimation and allocation process (REAP) to define workload and estimate resources and there is no widespread agreement that the process produces the quality of data needed to effectively estimate resources. As a result, staff are entering information into the Total Estimation and Allocation Mechanism (TEAM), REAP's validation component (which compares actual staff time to estimated staff time) on an inconsistent basis and officials report that the information is often not used to inform decision-making.

HUD's budget submission could more clearly explain the underlying rationale for HUD's budget request, even though primary users acknowledge that 2013 was an improvement over prior years. The primary users of the congressional budget justification (CBJ) are appropriations staff who said that CBJs from fiscal years 2008 to 2012 generally contained data tables for some program areas and did not always contain narrative that explained or justified the full-time equivalent request. According to HUD officials, HUD provided data tables because prior submissions with more detail did not prompt questions from Congress. Users of the CBJs GAO spoke to agreed that the fiscal year 2013 changes which provided more detail improved the clarity and utility of the justifications, but some still raised questions about the lack of adequate, consistent information available to help Congress make resource allocation decisions.