

Why GAO Did This Study

Strategic workforce planning can help DOD determine whether it has the civilian personnel with the necessary skills and competencies to perform a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, including mission-essential combat-support functions, such as logistics and maintenance, that traditionally have been performed by uniformed military personnel. In 2006, Congress enacted a requirement for DOD to produce strategic workforce plans, and GAO first reported on DOD's plans in 2008. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 mandates that GAO report to Congress on these plans.

GAO evaluated the extent to which (1) DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed statutory requirements; and (2) DOD's plan is consistent with key strategic workforce-planning principles. GAO examined DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan and associated documents, relevant legislation, and key strategic workforce-planning principles, and interviewed officials from across the department involved in producing the plan.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD align its workforce plans with the budget process and other workforce management initiatives. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendation.

View [GAO-14-565](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov.

HUMAN CAPITAL

DOD Should Fully Develop Its Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan to Aid Decision Makers

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed or partially addressed 27 of the 32 statutory reporting requirements and did not address 5 of the requirements. The statute requires DOD, for example, to conduct assessments of critical skills and competencies, to assess gaps in the workforce, and to assess the appropriate mix of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities. DOD has taken steps to address many of its reporting requirements since 2008. However, DOD has not yet addressed the requirement to assess the appropriate mix of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities in its plan, as shown in the table below. GAO previously has made 10 recommendations regarding statutory compliance covering a range of issues. In addition to recommending that DOD conduct the required assessments, GAO also has recommended providing clearer guidance for developing the plan and enhancing performance measures and is not making further recommendations related to statutory compliance at this time.

Extent to Which DOD Addressed Statutory Requirements in Its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan

Workforce	Requirements		
	Addressed	Partially addressed	Not addressed
Overall Civilian	3	6	1
Civilian Senior Leader	4	7	1
Financial Management	1	6	3

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565

Note: Data are from DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan. DOD was statutorily required to provide a plan for its overall civilian workforce, as well as separate chapters on its Civilian Senior Leader and Financial Management workforces.

DOD's strategic workforce plan does not fully incorporate key strategic workforce-planning principles. There are six key strategic workforce-planning principles, and most are similar to elements of the statutory reporting requirements, such as assessing critical skills and competencies. A key principle that is not addressed in the statutory requirements is strategic alignment, which links workforce strategies to an agency's mission and goals, and aligns them with, among other things, budget formulation. DOD's 2013-2018 plan noted the need to integrate the department's plan with the budget process but did not include specific details and, according to officials, DOD does not have actions underway to do so. Further, the plan identified strategies addressing some critical-skill staffing gaps, but did not provide specific information on the funding required to implement most of these strategies. The plan also did not align with recent recruiting, retention, and readiness initiatives to improve the morale of DOD's civilian workforce as reported to congressional defense committees. Without aligning its workforce plan with the budget process and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting and retention issues associated with declining morale, the department will not be in the best position to make informed management and resource decisions about its workforce.