

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-20-384](#), a report to the Committee on Oversight and Reform, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Federal agencies are required to provide equal opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities in all aspects of federal employment.

GAO was asked to examine agencies' efforts to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities. Among other objectives, this report examines: (1) the extent to which agencies met the 2010 federal goal to hire an additional 100,000 individuals with disabilities by 2015, and the retention rates of those employees between 2011 and 2017; and (2) practices selected agencies used to increase hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities.

GAO analyzed data and documents from OPM and interviewed agency officials. GAO interviewed officials from DOJ, SBA, and SSA about their efforts to enhance employment opportunities for disabled persons. GAO selected these three agencies because they represent a range of agency size and relatively high or low percentages of total employees with disabilities.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 6 recommendations: OPM should track and report retention data; DOJ, SBA, and SSA should assess training impacts; and DOJ and SBA should obtain employee feedback on reasonable accommodations. OPM and SSA concurred with GAO's recommendations; SBA concurred with one and partially concurred with one recommendation; DOJ did not agree or disagree with the recommendations. GAO continues to believe all recommendations are warranted.

View [GAO-20-384](#). For more information, contact Yvonne D. Jones at (202) 512-6806 or [jonesy@gao.gov](mailto:jonesy@gao.gov).

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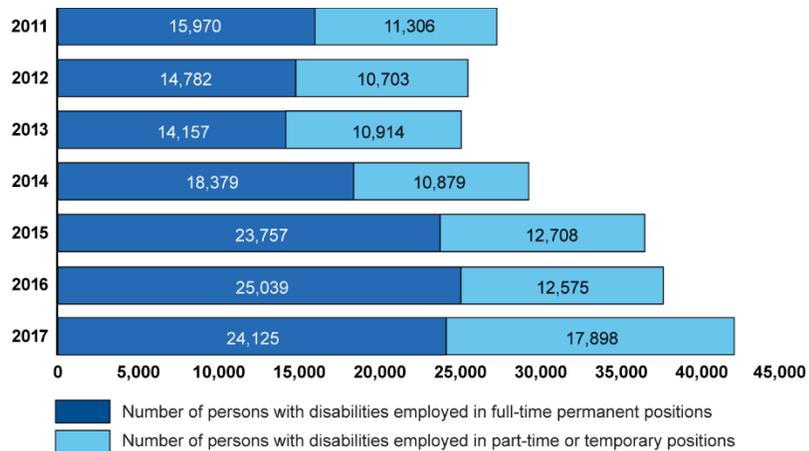
## DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

### Hiring Has Increased but Actions Needed to Assess Retention, Training, and Reasonable Accommodation Efforts

## What GAO Found

Approximately 143,600 persons with disabilities were hired during 2011 through 2015—plus an additional 79,600 hires in 2016 and 2017—across the 24 Chief Financial Officers Act agencies, exceeding the stated goal of 100,000 by 2015.

**The Federal Government Generally Increased Hiring of Persons with Disabilities, Fiscal Years 2011 through 2017**



Source: GAO analysis of Office of Personnel Management data. | GAO-20-384

About 39 percent of individuals with disabilities hired during 2011 through 2017 stayed less than 1 year and approximately 60 percent stayed less than 2 years. Of the total individuals without disabilities hired during that same time period, approximately 43 percent stayed less than 1 year and approximately 60 percent stayed less than 2 years.

Although targeted data tracking and analyses could help pinpoint root causes contributing to departure rates, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) does not track or report retention data on disabled employees. Doing so, and making such data available to agencies would facilitate more comprehensive analyses of the retention of employees with disabilities and identify needed improvements.

Officials at three agencies GAO examined—Department of Justice (DOJ), Small Business Administration (SBA), and Social Security Administration (SSA)—used various practices to increase hiring, such as training staff on Schedule A—a commonly used hiring authority to employ individuals with disabilities. However, the agencies neither assess the impact of training nor how it relates to contributing to performance goals of increasing the number of disabled hires.

Agencies are expected to track performance related to providing reasonable accommodations. The selected agencies reported having processes in place for receiving reasonable accommodations requests, but only SSA has procedures for obtaining feedback from employees after an accommodation is provided. Without such feedback, DOJ and SBA are limited in their ability to assess the continued effectiveness of reasonable accommodations provided to employees.