

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-106245](#), a report to the Republican Leader, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

EEOC is the primary federal agency that enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination and investigates allegations of employment discrimination. It received over 60,000 discrimination charges in fiscal year 2021. EEOC also provides guidance to employers and employees to help ensure compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws. According to EEOC, its enforcement and outreach activities play a critical role in advancing equal opportunity in the workplace.

GAO was asked to review EEOC's charge investigation and outreach processes. This report examines (1) the steps EEOC has taken since fiscal year 2011 to address its pending charge inventory, and what is known about the length and quality of its investigation process; and (2) how EEOC evaluates its outreach efforts, and the challenges officials said they face when providing outreach.

GAO analyzed EEOC charge data for fiscal years 2011 through 2021 and reviewed EEOC documentation. GAO conducted 9 discussion groups with officials in EEOC field offices selected based on geography and workload, and interviewed EEOC headquarters and field officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that EEOC monitor field office data on the length of the intake process to help it support offices that take longer to complete the process. EEOC concurred with this recommendation.

View [GAO-23-106245](#). For more information, contact Dawn G. Locke at (202) 512-7215 or [LockeD@gao.gov](mailto:LockeD@gao.gov).

October 2022

# EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

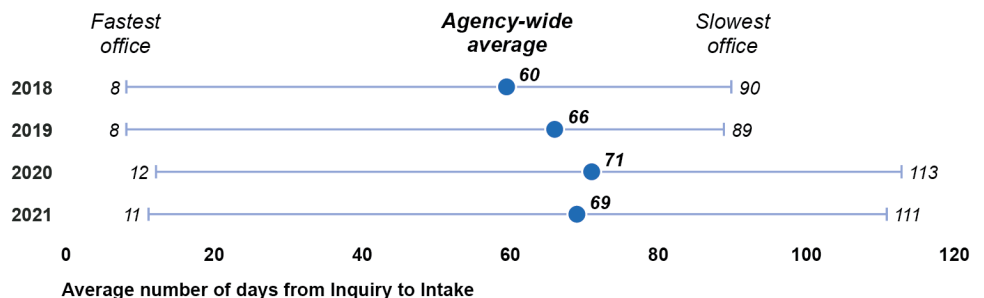
## Oversight of the Length of the Charge Intake Process Is Needed

### What GAO Found

From fiscal years 2011 to 2021, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reduced its pending charge inventory—the number of open charges as of the end of the fiscal year. Specifically, the pending charge inventory decreased from 82,199 to 43,520 charges during this time. EEOC officials identified steps that contributed to the reduction. For example, in fiscal year 2018, EEOC implemented an online portal, which allows individuals to file an inquiry and helps them determine if they meet the criteria to proceed with filing a charge.

EEOC monitors the quality of its investigations; however, GAO found that EEOC does not monitor the length of the intake process across field offices. For the purposes of this report, the intake process begins when an individual files an inquiry and ends when an EEOC official interviews the individual about the alleged incident. GAO's analysis of EEOC data from the online portal shows that the average length of the intake process varied among EEOC's 53 field offices (see figure). EEOC officials said they could monitor data on the length of the intake process, but do not routinely do so because they have focused on ensuring that individuals who file inquiries do not miss the statutory deadline for filing a charge. By not monitoring the length of the intake process across field offices, EEOC is missing information that could allow it to better identify and provide support to offices that take longer to complete the intake process.

The Length of the Intake Process Varies Greatly among EEOC Field Offices



Source: GAO analysis of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Data. | GAO-23-106245

EEOC tracks certain measures related to its outreach efforts such as the number of events it hosts and attendees, and is taking steps to develop measures to assess the impact of its efforts. However, Outreach and Education Coordinators (OEC) GAO spoke with identified challenges with providing outreach such as a need for additional training and support. EEOC headquarters officials identified multiple steps they take to provide training and support to OECs. For example, in fiscal year 2021, EEOC held an OEC conference that provided training on multiple topics including how to market outreach events.

This is a public version of a law enforcement sensitive report that GAO issued concurrently. Information that EEOC deemed law enforcement sensitive has been omitted from this report.