

Improvements Needed to Increase Transparency of Information on Senior Policy and Supporting Positions

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A report to congressional committees

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What GAO Found

The Periodically Listing Updates to Management (PLUM) Reporting website, maintained by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), publishes data on politically appointed and career senior positions for all executive branch agencies and certain legislative branch agencies. As of July 2025, the website reported information on 10,540 positions across 171 federal entities (including agencies, boards, commissions, and other organizations).

GAO found that although OPM had procedures in place to help ensure the quality of data published on the website, the data did not include all elements required by the act. For example, GAO found at least seven federal entities were missing from the data, as well as at least 130 presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed positions. Additionally, unique identifier numbers used for tracking appointees' movement within the federal workforce were not applied consistently in the data. GAO also found instances of errors and inconsistencies in the data, such as duplicative positions. Complete and accurate data would help Congress and the public identify and track individuals holding senior positions.

Example of a Duplicative Position on the 2025 PLUM Reporting Website

Position Title	Name of Incumbent (ID)	Location	Type of Appt.	Pay Plan	Level, Grade, or Pay	Tenure	Expiration
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Douglas Collins (1859891)	Washington, DC	PAS	EX	I		
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Source: Office of Personnel Management PLUM Reporting website: <https://www.opm.gov/about-us/open-government/plum-reporting/plum-data/>, accessed August 18, 2025. | GAO-26-108164

GAO found that the PLUM Reporting website, and OPM's efforts to implement the website, only partially addressed three key practices for transparently reporting government data and certain relevant statutory requirements. GAO found:

- OPM did not proactively engage members of the public to solicit information on how they used and valued the website.
- OPM has not yet made the PLUM Reporting data available through its agency data inventory, though it has plans in place to do so.
- OPM did not fully describe the data and their known limitations.

Non-governmental stakeholders cited concerns with the website including data timeliness, missing positions or errors, and a lack of potentially useful information. Stakeholders also suggested ways to make the website more valuable to users. By better engaging users and publicizing data quality limitations, OPM can improve the usefulness of the PLUM Reporting website and the data's value as a transparency tool.

Why GAO Did This Study

Information about the federal government's senior leaders is a critical tool for the public and Congress to understand who is serving in roles with significant decision-making authority and improve oversight. The PLUM Act of 2022 required OPM to establish a website, referred to as the PLUM Reporting website, to report data on senior positions. The act includes provisions for GAO to review implementation of the act.

This report reviews (1) actions OPM took to ensure federal entities reported data on senior positions that met relevant quality requirements, and (2) the extent to which the PLUM Reporting website addressed key practices for transparently reporting government data and relevant statutes.

GAO analyzed PLUM Reporting data for potential errors and compared data against other information on senior political appointees. GAO reviewed OPM documents and interviewed OPM officials about their efforts to ensure data quality. GAO also interviewed eight stakeholders from academia and civil society organizations about their experience using the website and data. Finally, GAO assessed the website against GAO criteria for data transparency.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making seven recommendations for OPM to improve the usefulness of the website by implementing a process to identify missing reportable positions, making technical changes to ensure unique identifier numbers are applied consistently, and developing a process for engaging the public, among other recommendations. OPM concurred with the recommendations and described ongoing and planned actions to address them.