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HUMAN CAPITAL

Workforce Diversity Governmentwide and at the Department of Homeland Security

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Strategic Issues





Highlights of [GAO-08-815T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created from a disparate group of agencies with multiple missions, values, and cultures into a cabinet department whose goals are to, among other things, protect U.S. borders and infrastructure, improve intelligence and information sharing, and prevent and respond to potential terrorist attacks. GAO designated the implementation and transformation of DHS as a high-risk area in 2003, and it remains so. While DHS has made progress, it continues to face challenges in transforming into an effective, integrated organization.

In response to a request to provide information on diversity in DHS and steps DHS is taking to create and manage a diverse workforce, GAO is providing demographic data related to the federal government as a whole and DHS's workforce. GAO obtained these data from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Central Personnel Data File (CPDF). GAO used its past work on leading diversity management practices (GAO-05-90) and reviewed data from DHS on its diversity management practices.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-815T](#). For more information, contact George Stalcup at (202) 512-6806 or stalcupg@gao.gov.

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What GAO Found

Data in OPM's CPDF show that as of September 2007, the overall percentages of women and minorities have increased in the career SES governmentwide, the highest nonpolitically appointed leaders in the federal workforce, and the SES developmental pool for potential successors since September 2003.

Governmentwide	September 2003			September 2007		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
		Women	Minorities		Women	Minorities
SES	6,221	26.4	15.2	6,555	29.1	15.8
SES potential developmental pool (GS-15s and GS-14s)	152,123	30.4	18.8	149,149	34.3	22.5

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

As part of GAO's recent analysis of the diversity of the SES and the SES developmental pool, GAO reviewed career, or permanent, SES appointments at DHS and DHS's SES developmental pool.

DHS	September 2003			September 2007		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
		Women	Minorities		Women	Minorities
SES	208	21.2	15.9	325	26.2	13.2
SES potential developmental pool (GS-15s and GS-14s)	6,525	30.2	19.5	10,107	32.5	24.1

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

During this 4-year period, the total number of career SES and those in the SES developmental pool for potential successors increased at DHS. The percentage of women in the SES increased, while the percentage of minorities decreased. For the SES developmental pool, the percentage of women and minorities increased. While GAO did not analyze the factors that contributed to changes in DHS's workforce for this period, OPM and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in their oversight roles require federal agencies, including DHS, to analyze their workforces.

As part of a strategic human capital planning approach, agencies need to develop long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, motivating, and retaining a diverse workforce. An agency's human capital planning should address the demographic trends that the agency faces with its workforce, especially retirements, which provide opportunities for agencies to affect the diversity of their workforces. DHS reported taking steps to affect the diversity of its workforce. These steps are consistent with several leading diversity management practices: (1) a diversity strategy as part of its strategic plan, (2) recruitment, (3) employee involvement, and (4) succession planning. For example, DHS cited its use of intern programs for recruiting and its implementation of two leadership development programs for managing succession. GAO has not conducted a review of DHS's diversity management efforts; therefore, it cannot comment on the effectiveness of DHS's implementation of these practices.

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to be here today to provide the Committee with information on diversity of the federal workforce and at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which was created from a disparate group of 22 agencies with multiple missions, values, and cultures into a cabinet department whose goals are to, among other things, protect U.S. borders and infrastructure, improve intelligence and information sharing, and prevent and respond to potential terrorist attacks. Since its inception in March 2003, DHS has faced enormous challenges related to protecting the nation from terrorism while organizing its predecessor agencies—several with existing program and management challenges—into a coherent and integrated department.

Because these challenges could have serious consequences for the security of our country, we designated the department's implementation and transformation a high-risk area in 2003 and reiterated our concerns in January 2005 and again in January 2007.¹ One key challenge DHS has faced is effectively and strategically managing its sizable workforce of nearly 167,000 employees in order to respond to current and emerging 21st century challenges.² Strategic human capital management must be the centerpiece of any serious change management strategy. Also, given the changing demographics of our society, diversity management is a key aspect of strategic human capital management. Developing a workforce that reflects all segments of society and our nation's diversity is a significant part of an agency's transformation of its organization to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Today, as requested, my remarks will focus on demographic data related to career positions in the federal government as a whole and DHS's workforce as well as actions the department has reported taking to create and manage a diverse workforce. For our analyses of governmentwide career and DHS career demographic data, we extracted data from the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) and analyzed these data to identify the extent of changes in the

¹GAO, *High Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-07-310](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 31, 2007).

²The 167,000 employees include those that are permanent, or career, and nonpermanent, or noncareer, as of September 2007. In this testimony, we only provide information on career employees.

representation of women and minorities in DHS's workforce between September 2003 and September 2007. However, we did not analyze the factors that contributed to changes identified in DHS's workforce over this 4-year period. We believe the CPDF is sufficiently reliable for the informational purpose of this testimony. We previously reported that governmentwide data from the CPDF for the key variables reported in this testimony—agency, gender, race or national origin, and pay plan or grade—were 96 percent or more accurate.³ We also obtained information from DHS on recruitment and other strategies used to develop and sustain a diverse workforce. We conducted this performance audit in May 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

In summary, when comparing DHS-wide data to governmentwide representation data, the greatest differences were among Hispanic men and White women—in both 2003 and 2007 the representation of Hispanic men was more than 10 percentage points higher than the representation governmentwide, and for White women, the representation was nearly 10 percentage points lower. When reviewing representation by pay plan/grades, among the higher grades—general schedule (GS) GS-13 to GS-15, Senior Executive Service (SES), and Senior Level/Senior Technical (SL/ST)—minority employees generally represented less than 10 percent of these career employees in 2003 and 2007. The total number of career SES at DHS increased by more than 50 percent between 2003 and 2007—going from 208 to 325. Overall minorities decreased from 15.9 percent of the total SES in 2003 to 13.2 percent in 2007. For the DHS developmental pool of potential SES successors (generally GS-15s and GS-14s), the total number increased by more than 50 percent—going from 6,525 to 10,107. White men decreased by 4.2 percentage points, and minorities increased by 4.6 percentage points. DHS reported taking steps to affect the diversity of its workforce that include establishing an objective in its strategic plan concerning the recruitment and development, among other things, of a diverse workforce; partnering with minority-serving institutions and

³GAO, *OPM's Central Personnel Data File: Data Appear Sufficiently Reliable to Meet Most Customer Needs*, [GAO/GGD-98-199](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 30, 1998). Also, in a document dated February 28, 2008, an OPM official confirmed that OPM continues to follow the CPDF data quality standards and procedures contained in our 1998 report.

professional service organizations; and implementing an SES candidate development program. These steps are consistent with several leading diversity management practices.

Representation of Women and Minorities Governmentwide and at DHS in 2003 and 2007

DHS, one of the 24 Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act agencies,⁴ was formed from 22 agencies, including the following agencies or parts of agencies: the U.S. Customs Service, which was formerly located in the Department of the Treasury; the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the Coast Guard; and most of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which was formerly located in the Department of Justice.

Representation of Career Employees DHS-wide and Governmentwide

Tables 1 and 2 show the representation of career employees at DHS and governmentwide as of September 2003 and September 2007, respectively.

Table 1: Representation of Career Employees at DHS and Governmentwide as of September 2003

Percent	September 2003											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
DHS-wide	6.8	7.1	0.5	0.2	2.7	1.5	14.2	4.8	44.4	17.7	0.1	0.0
Governmentwide	6.6	10.7	0.9	1.0	2.6	2.1	4.1	3.0	41.3	27.5	0.1	0.1

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women. Governmentwide data include civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2007).

⁴Pub. L. No. 101-576 (1990), as amended. The CFO Act agencies are 24 major executive agencies that are subject to the CFO Act. In 2007, the CFO Act agencies employed 98 percent of federal employees.

Table 2: Representation of Career Employees at DHS and Governmentwide as of September 2007

Percent	September 2007											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
DHS-wide	7.1	7.8	0.5	0.3	3.1	1.6	14.6	4.9	42.5	17.6	0.1	0.0
Governmentwide	6.9	11.1	0.9	1.1	2.9	2.4	3.6	3.1	40.4	27.4	0.2	0.1

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women. Governmentwide data include civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2007).

There were slight increases in percentage points among nearly all minority groups DHS-wide between 2003 and 2007. The greatest change DHS-wide was a decrease in White men. The greatest differences between the governmentwide data and DHS-wide data were among Hispanic men— in both 2003 and 2007 the representation of Hispanic men was more than 10 percentage points higher than the representation governmentwide, and for White women, the representation was nearly 10 percentage points lower. For both 2003 and 2007, the representation of women at DHS, with the exception of Hispanic women, was below the governmentwide level, the biggest difference being among White and African American women. See appendix I for a breakdown of the DHS-wide representation data by DHS components.

Representation at DHS by Pay Plan/Grade

Taking a closer look at the DHS-wide data, table 3 shows the representation of career employees at DHS by pay plan/grade as of September 2003. Minority employees generally represented less than 10 percent of career employees among all the pay plans and grades. Examples of the exceptions included the representation of Hispanic men in the blue collar pay plan, grades 5 to 8, and grades 9 to 12, where they ranged from 15 to over 21 percent. In grades 1 to 4, African American women represented over 17 percent, and Hispanic women represented nearly 13 percent of employees. Among the higher grades and pay plans—grades GS-13 to GS-15, SES, and SL/ST—the percentage of White women ranged from over 17 to more than 22 percent, and no minority group exceeded 9 percent of career employees.

Table 3: Representation at DHS by Pay Plan/Grade for 2003 for Career Employees

Pay Plan/Grade	September 2003											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified /other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Blue collar	11.1	0.4	0.8	0.0	3.3	0.1	15.0	0.1	67.3	1.6	0.2	0.0
Grades 1 to 4	6.7	17.2	0.4	0.2	1.7	4.3	9.4	12.8	18.9	28.7	0.0	0.0
Grades 5 to 8	4.8	10.3	0.4	0.4	3.6	2.6	18.0	9.3	28.8	21.7	0.1	0.0
Grades 9 to 12	4.4	5.8	0.4	0.2	2.8	1.5	21.4	5.3	42.7	15.4	0.1	0.0
Grade 13	5.1	5.8	0.6	0.2	2.4	1.3	8.9	3.2	54.6	17.7	0.2	0.0
Grade 14	3.9	5.4	0.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	6.2	2.2	57.2	22.0	0.1	0.0
Grade 15	3.4	3.9	0.6	0.1	1.0	0.8	4.5	1.6	61.8	22.2	0.2	0.1
SES ^a	6.3	2.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	4.8	0.5	66.8	17.3	0.0	0.0
SL/ST ^b	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other/unspecified ^c	11.1	7.7	0.6	0.3	2.5	0.9	7.9	3.0	48.0	17.9	0.0	0.0
DHS-wide	6.8	7.1	0.5	0.2	2.7	1.5	14.2	4.8	44.4	17.7	0.1	0.0

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women.

^aThe SES consists of permanent or career appointments, paid according to the SES pay schedule and those in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) who have equivalent positions. These are the highest nonpolitically appointed leaders in the federal workforce.

^bSL/ST includes those in the Senior Level and Senior Technical pay plans and those in FAA who have equivalent positions. These are primarily engineers, scientists, and other top-level professionals. They do not have the leadership role of the SES.

^cOther/unspecified includes those who could not be placed in one of the above pay plans or grades.

By 2007, the representation of career employees at DHS by pay plan/grade showed only slight increases and decreases. Exceptions, as shown in table 4, were in the percentage of White men in the SL/ST pay plan, which increased from 0 percent in 2003 to more than 65 percent in 2007, and White women, which during this period in the same pay plan increased from 0 percent to almost 28 percent. The representation of minorities was still less than 10 percent in grades GS-13 and above.

Table 4: Representation at DHS by Pay Plan/Grade for 2007 for Career Employees

Pay Plan/Grade	September 2007											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Blue collar	10.6	0.3	0.6	0.0	2.6	0.1	14.9	0.2	67.6	2.8	0.4	0.0
Grades 1 to 4	6.4	15.3	0.8	0.0	2.4	2.1	7.2	6.4	30.9	28.5	0.0	0.0
Grades 5 to 8	3.5	8.8	0.4	0.3	2.8	2.4	21.0	7.8	32.1	20.8	0.2	0.1
Grades 9 to 12	4.2	5.3	0.4	0.2	3.3	1.6	23.2	5.5	41.5	14.8	0.1	0.0
Grade 13	5.0	5.6	0.5	0.2	2.3	1.4	9.9	3.4	54.5	17.2	0.2	0.0
Grade 14	4.6	7.6	0.3	0.2	2.2	1.6	7.2	2.6	52.9	20.7	0.1	0.0
Grade 15	4.6	4.8	0.4	0.1	1.5	0.9	4.4	2.0	57.0	24.2	0.0	0.0
SES ^a	4.0	2.2	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	5.5	0.6	63.7	23.1	0.0	0.0
SL/ST ^b	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.0	65.5	27.6	0.0	0.0
Other/unspecified ^c	11.4	10.4	0.7	0.5	3.5	1.5	8.6	4.6	40.3	18.7	0.0	0.0
DHS-wide	7.1	7.8	0.5	0.3	3.1	1.6	14.6	4.9	42.5	17.6	0.1	0.0

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women.

^aThe SES consists of permanent or career appointments, paid according to the SES pay schedule and those in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) who have equivalent positions. These are the highest nonpolitically appointed leaders in the federal workforce.

^bSL/ST includes those in the Senior Level and Senior Technical pay plans and those in FAA who have equivalent positions. These are primarily engineers, scientists, and other top-level professionals. They do not have the leadership role of the SES.

^cOther/unspecified includes those who could not be placed in one of the above pay plans or grades.

Representation in Career SES Governmentwide and at DHS

As we have reported, leadership in agencies across the federal government, especially at senior executive levels, is essential to providing accountable, committed, consistent, and sustained attention to human capital and related organizational transformation issues. Having a diverse SES corps, which generally represents the most experienced segment of the federal workforce, can be an organizational strength that can bring a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to bear on policy development and implementation, strategic planning, problem solving, and decision making.

The members of the career SES are the highest nonpolitically appointed leaders in the federal workforce, and we recently looked more closely at their representation governmentwide.⁵ Table 5 shows the total number of career SES and the percentage of women and minority SES in DHS and at the 23 other CFO Act agencies in 2003 and 2007. Overall at DHS, the total number of SES increased by more than 50 percent between 2003 and 2007 going from 208 to 325. Within that total, the percentage of women increased from 21.2 percent to 26.2 percent. In 2003, the representation of women within individual CFO Act agencies ranged from 15.9 to 40.7 percent, with more than two-thirds of the agencies having at least 25 percent women—DHS had 21.2 percent. The representation of minorities within the CFO Act agencies in 2003 ranged from 7.2 to 42.0 percent with more than two-thirds having at least 15 percent minorities—DHS had 15.9 percent. In 2007, the representation of women at these agencies ranged from 19.9 to 45.5 percent, with more than half of the agencies having 30 percent or more women—DHS had 26.2 percent. For minority representation, CFO Act agency rates ranged from 6.1 to 43.8 percent, with two-thirds having at least 15 percent or more minorities—DHS had 13.2 percent.

Table 5: Career SES Members by CFO Act Agency for 2003 and 2007

CFO Act agency	September 2003			September 2007		
	Number of SES	Percent		Number of SES	Percent	
		Women	Minorities		Women	Minorities
Agriculture	299	25.1	18.7	318	28.3	18.9
AID	24	25.0	25.0	22	45.5	36.4
Commerce	317	28.1	16.1	317	28.4	14.5
Defense	1,066	20.1	7.2	1,123	22.6	8.3
Education	61	36.1	27.9	66	36.4	15.2
Energy	405	21.0	11.4	421	22.8	14.3
EPA	257	37.0	16.7	261	37.5	17.2
GSA	80	28.8	10.0	80	28.8	15.0
HHS	329	40.7	23.4	356	44.1	20.5
DHS	208	21.2	15.9	325	26.2	13.2
HUD	81	32.1	42.0	89	38.2	43.8

⁵Career SES members are individuals with civil service status (permanent) who are appointed competitively to SES positions and serve in positions below the top political appointees in the executive branch of government.

CFO Act agency	September 2003			September 2007		
	Number of SES	Percent		Number of SES	Percent	
		Women	Minorities		Women	Minorities
Interior	199	31.2	22.6	221	31.7	25.8
Justice	550	20.5	16.7	645	22.2	17.8
Labor	137	29.2	21.9	133	33.1	21.1
NASA	398	22.9	15.6	431	23.4	14.6
NRC	145	15.9	11.0	146	19.9	13.7
NSF	81	39.5	13.6	79	44.3	16.5
OPM	43	37.2	21.0	42	38.1	16.7
SBA	37	32.4	37.8	36	27.8	38.9
SSA	121	36.4	28.9	134	41.8	27.6
State	120	30.0	7.5	114	32.5	6.1
Transportation	194	32.0	17.5	188	36.2	16.0
Treasury	403	30.8	16.1	386	36.8	18.4
VA	262	18.7	9.5	236	30.9	14.8
Governmentwide ^a	6,221	26.4	15.3	6,555	29.1	15.8

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: AID is the Agency for International Development; EPA is the Environmental Protection Agency; GSA is the General Services Administration; HHS is the Department of Health and Human Services; DHS is the Department of Homeland Security; HUD is the Department of Housing and Urban Development; NASA is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; NRC is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; NSF is the National Science Foundation; SSA is the Social Security Administration; and VA is the Department of Veterans Affairs.

^aGovernmentwide data include civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2007).

Minority representation in the career SES governmentwide generally increased by less than 1 percentage point from September 2003 through September 2007 as shown in table 6. During this period, the representation of men in the SES decreased by 2.6 percentage points, and White men by 2.7 percentage points; whereas, the percentage of women increased by 2.7 percentage points.

Table 6: Changes in the Career SES Governmentwide for 2003 and 2007

Career SES profile	September 2003		September 2007		Change in career SES governmentwide	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American men	347	5.6	328	5.0	-19	-0.6
African American women	211	3.4	232	3.5	21	0.1
American Indian/Alaska Native men	55	0.9	60	0.9	5	0.0
American Indian/Alaska Native women	21	0.3	28	0.4	7	0.1
Asian/ Pacific Islander men	83	1.3	96	1.5	13	0.2
Asian/ Pacific Islander women	44	0.7	57	0.9	13	0.2
Hispanic men	139	2.2	176	2.7	37	0.5
Hispanic women	48	0.8	60	0.9	12	0.1
White men	3,942	63.4	3,976	60.7	34	-2.7
White women	1,319	21.2	1,526	23.3	207	2.1
Unspecified/other	12	0.2	16	0.2	4	0.0
Total^a	6,221	100.0	6,555	100.0	334	0.0
Minorities	948	15.2	1,037	15.8	89	0.6
Men	4,575	73.5	4,646	70.9	71	-2.6
Minority men	624	10.0	660	10.1	36	0.1
Women	1,644	26.4	1,909	29.1	265	2.7
Minority women	324	5.2	377	5.8	53	0.6

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Note: Governmentwide data include civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2007).

^aPercentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. The number of men and women might not sum to the total SES because some employees may have been missing data for race/ethnicity but may have had valid data for gender or some employees may have been missing data for gender but may have had valid data for race/ethnicity.

At DHS, the extent of change in the representation of career SES employees was generally greater than the change that occurred in the governmentwide SES from September 2003 through September 2007. For example, as shown in table 7, the percentage of White women in DHS's career SES was 23.1 percent in 2007, 5.8 percentage points above the 2003 rate of 17.3 percent. White men and African American men experienced the largest decrease in their representation in the career SES by 2007, dropping 3.1 and 2.3 percentage points, respectively. Overall, minorities decreased from 15.9 to 13.2 percent.

Table 7: Changes in Career SES at DHS for 2003 and 2007

DHS Career SES profile	September 2003		September 2007		Change in DHS career SES	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American men	13	6.3	13	4.0	0	-2.3
African American women	6	2.9	7	2.2	1	-0.7
American Indian/ Alaska Native men	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.3
American Indian/ Alaska Native women	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian/ Pacific Islander men	2	1.0	1	0.3	-1	-0.7
Asian/ Pacific Islander women	1	0.5	1	0.3	0	-0.2
Hispanic men	10	4.8	18	5.5	8	0.7
Hispanic women	1	0.5	2	0.6	1	0.1
White men	139	66.8	207	63.7	68	-3.1
White women	36	17.3	75	23.1	39	5.8
Unspecified/other	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total^a	208	100.0	325	100.0	117	0.0
Minorities	33	15.9	43	13.2	10	-2.7
Men	164	78.9	240	73.8	76	-5.1
Minority men	25	12.0	33	10.2	8	-1.8
Women	44	21.2	85	26.2	41	5.0
Minority women	8	3.8	10	3.1	2	-0.7

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

^aPercentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Representation in the Career SES Developmental Pool Governmentwide and at DHS

The vast majority of potential successors for career SES positions will come from the GS pay plan for grades GS-15 and GS-14, the levels that serve as the SES developmental pool.⁶ Table 8 shows the changes in the representation of the SES developmental pool governmentwide from September 2003 to September 2007. Governmentwide, the total number of employees in the SES developmental pool decreased slightly from September 2003 to September 2007. The greatest change in representation was a decrease of 5.3 percentage points in the number of White men from 2003 to 2007. The percentage of women in the governmentwide SES

⁶We included GS-15, GS-14, and equivalent employees. GS-equivalent employees are those in equivalent grades under other pay plans that follow the GS grade structure and job evaluation methodology or are equivalent by statute.

developmental pool increased by 3.9 percentage points between 2003 and 2007, but the percentage of men in this developmental pool decreased by this same amount. By 2007, the representation of each of the minority groups in the governmentwide SES developmental pool increased by 1.3 percentage points or fewer, resulting in an overall increase of 3.7 percentage points for minorities.

Table 8: Changes in the SES Developmental Pool Governmentwide for 2003 and 2007

Profile of SES developmental pool (GS-15s and GS-14s)	September 2003		September 2007		Change in SES developmental pool governmentwide	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American men	6,035	4.0	6,439	4.3	404	0.3
African American women	7,276	4.8	9,108	6.1	1,832	1.3
American Indian/ Alaska Native men	978	0.6	938	0.6	-40	0.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native women	489	0.3	590	0.4	101	0.1
Asian/ Pacific Islander men	5,452	3.6	6,305	4.2	853	0.6
Asian/ Pacific Islander women	2,546	1.7	3,503	2.3	957	0.6
Hispanic men	4,051	2.7	4,418	3.0	367	0.3
Hispanic women	1,740	1.1	2,193	1.5	453	0.4
White men	89,333	58.7	79,718	53.4	-9,615	-5.3
White women	34,081	22.4	35,650	23.9	1,569	1.5
Unspecified/other	142	0.1	287	0.2	145	0.1
Total^a	152,123	100.0	149,149	100.0	-2,974	0.0
Minorities	28,567	18.8	33,494	22.5	4,927	3.7
Men	105,945	69.6	98,003	65.7	-7,942	-3.9
Minority men	16,516	10.9	18,100	12.1	1,584	1.2
Women	46,178	30.4	51,146	34.3	4,968	3.9
Minority women	12,051	7.9	15,394	10.3	3,343	2.4

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Note: Governmentwide includes civilian employees of all cabinet-level departments, independent agencies, commissions, councils, and boards in the executive branch except the intelligence agencies, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Foreign Service (as of 2007). We included GS-15, GS-14, and equivalent employees. GS-equivalent employees are those in equivalent grades under other pay plans that follow the GS grade structure and job evaluation methodology or are equivalent by statute.

^aPercentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Unlike the total number of employees in the governmentwide SES developmental pool, those in DHS's SES developmental pool increased by more than half. The two greatest changes in representation within DHS's career SES developmental pool from September 2003 through September

2007 were for White men, which decreased by 4.2 percentage points, and minorities, which increased by 4.6 percentage points, of which African American women increased by 1.8 percentage points, as shown in table 9.

Table 9: Changes in the Career SES Developmental Pool at DHS for 2003 and 2007

Profile of DHS SES developmental pool (GS-15s and GS-14s)	September 2003		September 2007		Change in DHS career SES	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American men	245	3.8	467	4.6	222	0.8
African American women	328	5.0	683	6.8	355	1.8
American Indian/Alaska Native men	34	0.5	36	0.4	2	-0.1
American Indian/Alaska Native women	12	0.2	19	0.2	7	0.0
Asian/ Pacific Islander men	87	1.3	204	2.0	117	0.7
Asian/ Pacific Islander women	56	0.9	138	1.4	82	0.5
Hispanic men	375	5.8	641	6.3	266	0.5
Hispanic women	133	2.0	245	2.4	112	0.4
White men	3,806	58.3	5,469	54.1	1,663	-4.2
White women	1,439	22.1	2,195	21.7	756	-0.4
Unspecified/other	10	0.2	10	0.1	0	-0.1
Total^a	6,525	100.0	10,107	100.0	3,582	0.0
Minorities	1,270	19.5	2,433	24.1	1,163	4.6
Men	4,556	69.8	6,824	67.5	2,268	-2.3
Minority men	741	11.4	1,348	13.3	607	1.9
Women	1,969	30.2	3,283	32.5	1,314	2.3
Minority women	529	8.1	1,085	10.7	556	2.6

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

^aPercentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

While we did not analyze factors that contributed to changes in DHS workforce from September 2003 through September 2007, OPM and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in their oversight roles require federal agencies, including DHS, to analyze their workforces. Both OPM and EEOC also report on governmentwide representation levels. Under OPM's regulations implementing the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP),⁷ agencies are required to determine where representation levels for covered groups are lower than

⁷5 U.S.C. § 7201 and 5 C.F.R. Part 720, Subpart B.

the civilian labor force (CLF) and take steps to address those differences. EEOC's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) provides guidance and standards to federal agencies for establishing and maintaining effective equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs, including a framework for executive branch agencies to help ensure effective management, accountability, and self-analysis to determine whether barriers to EEO exist and to identify and develop strategies to mitigate or eliminate the barriers to participation.⁸ Specifically EEOC's MD-715 states that agency personnel programs and policies should be evaluated regularly to ascertain whether such programs have any barriers that tend to limit or restrict equitable opportunities for open competition in the workplace. The initial step is for agencies to analyze their workforce data with designated benchmarks, including the CLF. If analysis of their workforce profiles identifies potential barriers, agencies are to examine all related policies, procedures, and practices to determine whether an actual barrier exists. EEOC requires agencies to report the results of their analyses annually.

DHS Has Reported Taking Steps to Affect the Diversity of Its Workforce That Are Consistent with Leading Diversity Management Practices

A high-performance organization relies on a dynamic workforce with the requisite talents and up-to-date skills to ensure that it is equipped to accomplish its mission and achieve its goals. Such organizations typically foster a work environment in which people are enabled and motivated to contribute to continuous learning and improvement as well as mission accomplishment and which provides both accountability and fairness for all employees. In addition, the approach that a high-performance organization takes toward its workforce is inclusive and draws on the strengths of employees at all levels and of all backgrounds. This approach is consistent with that of diversity management. We have defined diversity management as a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to an organization's strategic goals and objectives. In our past work, we identified nine leading practices in diversity management that experts agreed should be present in some combination for creating

⁸EEOC defines barriers as agency policies, principles, or practices that limit or tend to limit employment opportunities for those of a particular gender, race, or ethnic background or based on an individual's disability status.

and managing diversity.⁹ The leading diversity management practices identified by a majority of experts were as follows:

- **Top leadership commitment**—a vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management.
- **Diversity as part of an organization’s strategic plan**—a diversity strategy and plan that are developed and aligned with the organization’s strategic plan.
- **Diversity linked to performance**—the understanding that a more diverse and inclusive work environment can yield greater productivity and help improve individual and organizational performance.
- **Measurement**—a set of quantitative and qualitative measures of the effect of various aspects of an overall diversity program.
- **Accountability**—the means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives.
- **Succession planning**—an ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of talent for an organization’s potential future leaders.
- **Recruitment**—the process of attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment.
- **Employee involvement**—the contribution of employees in driving diversity throughout an organization.
- **Diversity training**—organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity.

DHS’s Acting Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) testified in April 2008 on actions the Department is taking to create and manage its workforce.¹⁰ These actions are consistent with leading diversity management practices in four areas: (1) a diversity strategy as part of its strategic plan, (2) recruitment, (3) employee involvement, and (4) succession planning. We have not conducted a review of DHS’s diversity management efforts; therefore, we cannot comment on the effectiveness of DHS’s implementation of these practices. In addition, because we do not

⁹See GAO, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples*, GAO-05-90 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 14, 2005).

¹⁰Statement by Bray Barnes, Acting Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security, before the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia and Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia (Apr. 3, 2008).

highlight a particular practice, it is not meant to imply success or lack of success by DHS in implementing other diversity management practices.

Diversity strategy as part of the strategic plan. DHS established an objective in its 2004 Strategic Plan to “ensure effective recruitment, development, compensation, succession management and leadership of a diverse workforce to provide optimal service at a responsible cost.” In an August 2007 progress report on implementation of mission and management functions,¹¹ we indicated that DHS had taken action to satisfy most of the elements related to developing a results-oriented strategic human capital plan. We noted that in addition to the strategic human capital plan that DHS issued in October 2004, which covers 2004 to 2008, the department developed a fiscal year 2007 and 2008 Human Capital Operational Plan, which provides measurable goals that the department is using to gauge the effectiveness of its human capital efforts. DHS officials provided us with a copy of DHS’s Corporate Diversity Strategy, issued in March 2008, and stated that the department has developed a Diversity Action Plan, which it plans to submit to the DHS Diversity Council for approval in May 2008.¹² The Diversity Strategy outlines DHS’s policy of encouraging a diverse workforce and the value of a diverse workforce in accomplishing DHS’s mission. Among the guiding principles is integrating diversity into the organization culture rather than as a stand alone program and recognizing that diversity is a matter of equity and fairness. To help ensure accountability, among other things, the strategy calls for establishing a senior-level Diversity Council, which DHS officials reported has been done, integrating diversity strategies into DHS’s comprehensive human resource operation, and ensuring that all DHS leaders have access to training, tools, and support needed to serve as de facto diversity champions.

Recruitment. To achieve its strategic plan objective of a diverse workforce, in his April 2008 testimony, DHS’s Acting CHCO stated that recruitment strategies have been implemented at the department and component levels to improve diversity of the DHS talent pool. DHS officials told us that the department partners with several minority-serving institutions and participates in several intern, scholarship, and fellowship

¹¹GAO, *Department of Homeland Security: Progress Report on Implementation of Mission and Management Functions*, [GAO-07-454](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2007).

¹²DHS officials stated that the DHS Diversity Council is made up of the second- and third-highest ranking officials from each DHS component.

programs; officials provided a recruitment brochure. These officials also indicated that in October 2007, the DHS began a Veterans' Outreach Program as a means of recruiting a diverse workforce. This outreach strategy consists of (1) a Web site for one-stop employment and other information, (2) an advisory forum of external veterans as stakeholders, and (3) training in veterans' preference and reemployment rights for EEO and human capital specialists. DHS has also created an SES-level Director of Recruiting and Diversity within the Chief Human Capital Office.

Employee Involvement. Employees can make valuable contributions in driving diversity throughout an organization. Our work on leading diversity management practices identified several forms these contributions can take, including mentoring and community outreach with private employers, public schools, and universities. DHS officials described actions the department is taking to provide opportunities for employees at various levels throughout the department to receive mentoring. In addition, DHS officials stated that they have developed formal partnerships with minority professional service organizations, including the Urban League's Black Executive Exchange Program, where DHS provides speakers that participate in outreach programs at historically black colleges and universities. DHS officials indicated they are pursuing similar partnerships with the National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives, the African American Federal Executive Association, and the Asian American Executive Network.

Succession Planning. Succession planning is a comprehensive, ongoing strategic process that provides for forecasting an organization's senior leadership and other needs; identifying and developing candidates who have the potential to be future leaders; and selecting individuals from among a diverse pool of qualified candidates to meet executive resource needs. Succession planning and management can help an organization become what it needs to be, rather than simply recreate the existing organization. Leading organizations go beyond a "replacement" approach that focuses on identifying particular individuals as possible successors for specific top-ranking positions and engage in broad, integrated succession planning and management efforts that focus on strengthening both current and future capacity. They anticipate the need for leaders and other key employees with the necessary competencies to successfully meet the complex challenges of the 21st century.

For DHS, in addition to the changes that will occur as a result of the upcoming new administration, several factors including recent turnover and expected retirements provide opportunities for DHS to affect the

diversity of its workforce and highlight the importance of succession planning. Recently, we reported that the overall attrition rates for permanent DHS employees (excluding SES and presidential appointees) at 8 percent and 7 percent in 2005 and 2006, respectively, exceeded the 4 percent average rate for all cabinet-level agencies.¹³ These higher attrition rates, about 14 to 17 percent, were among transportation security officers in DHS's Transportation Security Administration. The attrition rate for SES and presidential appointees was also higher than the average senior-level attrition rate for all cabinet-level departments. As for retirements, about 20 percent of career employees at DHS as of fiscal year 2007 are projected to be eligible to retire by 2012, and certain key occupations within the department are expected to have high retirement eligibility rates, such as customs and border protection agents—about 51 percent.¹⁴

In 2006, OPM reported that approximately 60 percent of the executive branch's 1.6 million white-collar employees and 90 percent of about 6,000 federal executives will be eligible for retirement over the next 10 years. Considering retirement eligibility and actual retirement rates of the SES is important because individuals normally do not enter the SES until well into their careers; thus SES retirement eligibility is much higher than for the workforce in general. If a significant number of SES members were to retire, it could result in a loss of leadership continuity, institutional knowledge, and expertise among the SES corps, with the degree of loss varying among agencies and occupations.

Succession planning also is tied to the federal government's opportunity to affect the diversity of the executive corps through new appointments. Racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the SES is an important component for the effective operation of the government. In September 2003, we reported that agencies in other countries use succession planning and management to achieve a more diverse workforce, maintain their leadership capacity, and increase the retention of high-potential staff.¹⁵

¹³GAO, *Homeland Security: DHS's Action to Recruit and Retain Staff and Comply with the Vacancies Reform Act*, [GAO-07-758](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 16, 2007).

¹⁴GAO, *Older Workers: Federal Agencies Face Challenges but Have Opportunities to Hire and Retain Experienced Employees*, [GAO-08-630T](#), (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2008).

¹⁵GAO, *Human Capital: Insights for U.S. Agencies from Other Countries' Succession Planning and Management Initiatives*, [GAO-03-914](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 15, 2003).

According to the Acting CHCO's April 3, 2008, testimony and discussion with senior level human capital officials, the department is taking steps to develop a qualified and diverse pool of applicants for SES positions by preparing its mid-career employees through a variety of leadership development programs. These programs include the DHS SES Candidate Development Program (primarily for GS-15s) and the DHS Fellows Program (for GS-13s, GS-14s, and GS-15s). See appendix II for representation data for both programs since their inception. According to DHS officials, the DHS Fellows Program, initiated in 2006, is a competitive developmental program where participants are placed in high-visibility rotational assignments, receive training in such areas as leadership, and form small groups to work on specific projects. After completion of this 11-month program, participants remain in their current assignments but, according to DHS officials, are prepared for advancement when the opportunities arise. Participants in both of the DHS leadership programs receive mentoring and coaching and rotational assignments. However, according to DHS officials, employees at other levels of the organization can also participate in ad hoc mentoring and rotational assignments. Effective training and development programs can enhance the federal government's ability to prepare its workforce and thereby achieve results. The efforts that DHS officials described are consistent with these practices.

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Contacts and Acknowledgments

For further information regarding this statement, please contact George Stalcup, Director, Strategic Issues, on (202) 512-6806 or at stalcupg@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. Individuals making key contributions to this statement included Belva Martin and Kiki Theodoropoulos, Assistant Directors; Karin Fangman; Mary Y. Martin; and Greg Wilmoth.

Appendix I: Department of Homeland Security Representation Data by Component

Tables 10 and 11 below provide demographic data by race and gender on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) career employees by DHS component for September 2003 and September 2007.¹ In 2003 and 2007, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) and the U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement (USICE) had the highest percentage of Hispanic men, while the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) had the highest percentage of African American men.

Table 10: Percentage Representation at DHS by Component for Career Employees as of September 2003

Component	September 2003											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
DNDO	7.8	17.3	0.6	0.0	2.8	1.7	0.6	1.7	48.0	19.0	0.6	0.0
FEMA	5.1	11.6	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.7	1.4	1.4	52.2	25.9	0.0	0.0
FLETC	4.1	4.7	1.2	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.2	57.0	29.2	0.0	0.0
HQ ^a	4.4	16.6	0.0	0.3	1.7	1.4	2.8	1.1	42.3	29.6	0.0	0.0
IG	8.2	15.5	1.0	0.0	3.1	1.8	5.9	4.9	41.2	18.3	0.0	0.0
TSA	11.1	7.8	0.6	0.3	2.5	1.0	8.0	3.1	47.5	18.2	0.1	0.0
USCBP	4.5	6.3	0.5	0.2	3.3	1.8	14.9	6.3	43.0	19.2	0.2	0.0
USCG	6.3	10.1	0.4	0.2	2.5	1.6	2.6	1.7	50.2	24.0	0.2	0.1
USCIS	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
USICE	4.3	5.8	0.4	0.2	2.8	1.8	24.1	6.7	39.1	14.6	0.1	0.0
USSS	9.0	9.0	0.6	0.2	1.5	0.9	4.0	2.2	56.7	16.0	0.0	0.0
Other/unspecified	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
DHS-wide	6.8	7.1	0.5	0.2	2.7	1.5	14.2	4.8	44.4	17.7	0.1	0.0

Source: GAO analysis of the Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women. DNDO is the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office; FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency; FLETC is the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; HQ is DHS Headquarters; IG is the Inspector General's Office; TSA is the Transportation Security Administration; USCBP is the U.S. Customs and Border Protection; USCG is the U.S. Coast Guard; USCIS is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; USICE is the U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement, and USSS is the U.S. Secret Service. Other/unspecified includes those who could not be placed in one of the above DHS components.

¹We did not analyze whether diversity differences between DHS components corresponded to differences in occupational make-up, educational job requirements, geographic location of jobs, or other relevant factors.

^aDHS HQ includes several program offices, such as the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), and staff offices, such as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, under the Directorate for Management.

^bUSCIS did not report data to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) for 2003.

Table 11: Percentage Representation at DHS by Component for Career Employees as of September 2007

Component	September 2007											
	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
DNDO	4.1	9.4	0.2	0.4	2.4	0.9	2.4	1.2	50.8	28.3	0.0	0.0
FEMA	7.3	14.1	0.4	0.4	1.5	0.9	1.4	1.2	49.3	23.6	0.0	0.0
FLETC	3.9	5.1	1.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	2.7	1.9	57.9	25.7	0.0	0.0
HQ ^a	6.6	14.8	0.2	0.2	1.7	1.7	1.2	1.0	46.8	25.8	0.0	0.0
IG	5.8	12.8	0.6	0.2	2.5	2.7	8.3	5.4	41.2	19.6	0.3	0.4
TSA	11.3	10.5	0.7	0.5	3.5	1.5	8.6	4.6	39.8	18.9	0.0	0.0
USCBP	3.1	3.3	0.4	0.1	3.1	1.2	27.6	5.4	42.8	12.9	0.1	0.0
USCG	6.2	9.3	0.4	0.2	2.3	1.8	2.8	1.4	53.4	21.9	0.2	0.1
USCIS	4.3	13.1	0.2	0.4	4.0	5.3	5.0	9.2	26.3	32.0	0.0	0.0
USICE	5.5	5.8	0.5	0.2	2.8	1.3	16.1	5.8	46.3	15.5	0.1	0.0
USSS	9.3	8.4	0.4	0.1	2.0	1.2	4.0	2.1	57.7	14.6	0.2	0.1
Other/unspecified	1.8	5.3	0.0	0.0	3.5	7.0	1.8	0.0	61.4	19.3	0.0	0.0
DHS-wide	7.1	7.8	0.5	0.3	3.1	1.6	14.6	4.9	42.5	17.6	0.1	0.0

Source: GAO analysis of OPM's CPDF.

Notes: M = Men and W = Women. DNDO is the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office; FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency; FLETC is the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; HQ is DHS Headquarters; IG is the Inspector General's Office; TSA is the Transportation Security Administration; USCBP is the U.S. Customs and Border Protection; USCG is the U.S. Coast Guard; USCIS is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; USICE is the U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement, and USSS is the U.S. Secret Service. Other/unspecified includes those who could not be placed in one of the above DHS components.

^aDHS HQ includes several program offices, such as the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), and staff offices, such as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, under the Directorate for Management.

Appendix II: Representation Data for DHS Leadership Development Programs

DHS officials stated that they have two formal leadership development programs to prepare future DHS leaders: the DHS Fellows Program for GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 staff (an 11-month program) and the DHS Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program, generally for GS-15s (an 18-month program). Tables 12 and 13 below provide a breakdown of the representation of women and minorities in each of these programs.

Table 12: Representation in DHS Fellows Program for GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 Staff

DHS Fellows Program	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2007 class	1	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	15	8	0	0	30
2008 class	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	29	11	2	0	50

Source: DHS.

Note: M = Men and W = Women.

Table 13: Representation in DHS SES Candidate Development Program

DHS SES Candidate Development Program	African American		American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian/Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White		Unspecified/other		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2007 to 2008 class	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	9	2	0	0	14
2008 to 2009 class	2	3	0	0	1	0	3	0	10	4	0	0	23

Source: DHS.

Note: M = Men and W = Women.

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