



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.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Workforce Diversity Governmentwide and at the Department of Homeland Security

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.