



Highlights of [GAO-04-697](#), a report to the Senate and House Committees on Armed Services

DEFENSE SPACE ACTIVITIES

Additional Actions Needed to Implement Human Capital Strategy and Develop Space Personnel

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) relies on space for many critical capabilities, and its continued success in space operations depends on having sufficient space-qualified personnel. Space-qualified personnel are needed to develop technology, doctrine, and concepts and operate complex systems. In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, Congress required DOD to develop a strategy for developing and integrating national security space personnel. DOD completed it in February 2004.

Congress also required GAO to assess DOD's space human capital strategy and the military services' efforts to develop their space personnel. In the first of two required reports, GAO assessed (1) whether DOD's space human capital strategy and management approach promote development and integration of the services' space personnel and (2) the extent of the services' initiatives to develop and manage their space personnel.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD develop an implementation plan for its strategy, as well as develop strategies and establish focal points for managing the services' space personnel.

In its comments, DOD generally concurred with GAO's report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-697.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Henry L. Hinton, Jr. at (202) 512-4300 or hintonh@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

DOD's space human capital strategy is a significant first step that promotes the development and integration of DOD's space personnel by providing strategic goals and objectives; however, DOD does not have a complete results-oriented management approach to implement the strategy because it does not include an implementation plan that details specific actions, time frames, and evaluation measures. The space human capital strategy provides general direction for developing and integrating DOD space personnel, and it identified key actions needed for implementation. DOD has not completed any of these actions. Without an implementation plan, DOD will not be in a sound position to effectively monitor and evaluate implementation of the strategy and achieve the strategy's purpose of integrating the services' space personnel into a cohesive DOD total force.

The military services vary in the extent to which they have identified and implemented initiatives to develop and manage their space personnel. The Air Force and the Marine Corps have taken significant actions in developing and managing their space personnel, including developing space human capital strategies and designating organizational focal points. The Air Force, which has the largest number of space personnel, approved its space human capital strategy in July 2003, and it is implementing its initiatives (see table below). The other services are working on similar initiatives and have completed some, but many will take years to fully implement. The Army's and the Navy's actions in developing their space personnel have been limited because they do not have clear goals and objectives for developing their space personnel or organizational focal points to manage them. Without these tools, the Army and the Navy may not be able to determine their requirements for space personnel and develop sufficient numbers of space personnel with the necessary training, education, and experience to meet service and joint needs.

Air Force Space Personnel Strategy Initiatives

Initiative	Description
Identification and classification of space personnel	Determine the unique skills that distinguish space personnel from personnel in other career specialties and identify the space-qualified personnel.
Education and training	Institute stronger, technically oriented space education and training programs.
Positions and requirements	Identify each space personnel position and determine the education, experience, and certification requirements for every position.
Certification	Design a certification program to measure progress throughout an individual's career.
Professional development	Issue career development guidance for space personnel.
Management	Establish a permanent space professional management function.

Source: GAO's analysis of information provided by the Air Force Space Command.