



Highlights of [GAO-06-214](#), a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

In April 2005 GAO reported on the EEO policy framework in the federal workplace and the roles of EEOC and OPM. This report, in response to a congressional request, provides information on (1) federal agency EEO and human capital managers' views of the EEO framework requirements; (2) their views on the usefulness of guidance and feedback from EEOC and OPM concerning these requirements; and (3) how and to what extent EEOC and OPM coordinate in developing policy, providing guidance, and exercising oversight.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that EEOC and OPM regularly coordinate in carrying out their responsibilities under the EEO framework and seek opportunities for streamlining like reporting requirements. Congress should require OPM and EEOC to annually provide a joint statement of actions taken to implement GAO's recommendations.

EEOC and OPM both acknowledged that their collaborative efforts could be strengthened but took exception to the recommendation to streamline requirements and disagreed with certain statements within the report. GAO continues to believe that exploring opportunities to streamline requirements is important for government effectiveness and efficiency.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-214.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact George H. Stalcup at (202) 512-9490 or stalcupg@gao.gov.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Improved Coordination Needed between EEOC and OPM in Leading Federal Workplace EEO

What GAO Found

EEO and human capital officials in federal agencies we surveyed said that some requirements of the EEO framework contribute more than others to achieving EEO, affirmative employment, and workforce diversity, and in influencing human capital policies, practices, and strategic planning. They also said that some requirements are very similar or redundant, such as EEOC's affirmative employment program and OPM's program for recruiting minorities and women. This creates duplication of effort as agencies sometimes have to submit the same information in different reports to EEOC and OPM. Further, the officials said they experienced added administrative burden because of inconsistent requirements.

The officials also said that guidance from EEOC on EEO, affirmative employment, and workforce diversity issues was more frequent and more useful than that from OPM. Some officials questioned the usefulness of feedback from EEOC and OPM on their agencies' performance or submitted reports. Less than half reported that the feedback was useful or very useful and a substantial number of respondents reported that they received no feedback from OPM. In addition, EEO and human capital officials expressed the strong view that both OPM and EEOC could be doing more to help their agencies.

We found little evidence of coordination at the operating level between EEOC and OPM in developing policy, providing guidance, and exercising oversight, despite overlapping responsibilities in federal workplace EEO. For example, EEOC and OPM officials do not routinely review reports that the other agency receives from federal agencies, even though those reports deal with similar matters. In addition, EEOC and OPM officials do not coordinate with each other when conducting on-site reviews of EEO-related matters at agencies. Good management practice as well as federal statute and executive order call for coordination, and not doing so results in lost opportunity to realize consistency, efficiency, and public value in EEO policy making and oversight. The Office of Management and Budget made a recommendation to OPM in 2005 that it develop a regular/formal working relationship with EEOC with respect to those programs where it shares oversight responsibility with EEOC in order to improve overall government efficiency. Although EEOC officials acknowledged a need to coordinate at the operating level and to develop an institutional coordination process, OPM officials suggested that coordination need not be institutionalized.