



Highlights of [GAO-03-1046](#), a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Readiness, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Between fiscal years 1989 and 2002, the Department of Defense (DOD) reduced its civilian workforce by about 38 percent, with little attention to shaping or specifically sizing this workforce for the future. As a result, the civilian workforce is imbalanced in terms of the shape, skills, and experience needed by the department. DOD is taking steps to transform its civilian workforce. To assist with this transformation, the department is considering adopting an Army workforce-planning model, known as the Civilian Forecasting System (CIVFORS), which the Army uses to forecast its civilian workforce needs. Other federal agencies are also considering adopting this model. GAO was asked to review the adequacy of the steps the Army has taken to ensure the credibility of the model.

What GAO Recommends

To assure the reliability of Army civilian workforce projections and the appropriateness of the model for use DOD-wide and by other federal agencies, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to appropriately document the forecasting capability of the model.

Although DOD stated, in written comments on a draft of this report, it did not concur with GAO's recommendation, the Army is taking actions that, in effect, implement it.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1046.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Derek Stewart, 202-512-5559, stewardd@gao.gov.

DOD PERSONNEL

Documentation of the Army's Civilian Workforce-Planning Model Needed to Enhance Credibility

What GAO Found

The Army has taken adequate steps to ensure that the historical personnel data used in the model are sufficiently reliable and that the information technology structure adequately and appropriately supports the model. For example, the Army has established adequate control measures (e.g., edit checks, expert review, etc.) to ensure that the historical data that goes into the model are sufficiently reliable. Moreover, it has taken adequate steps to ensure that the information technology support structure (i.e., the software and hardware used to interface with and house the model) would enable continuity of operations, functionality, and system modification and operations.

However, the Army has not demonstrated that it has taken adequate steps to ensure that the model's forecasting capability provides the basis for making accurate forecasts of the Army's civilian workforce. The Army's original certification of CIVFORS in 1987 was based on a formal documented verification and validation of the model structure that has not been formally updated since that time even though the Army has undertaken several model improvements. According to the Army's CIVFORS program manager, the Army has taken several steps, to include an independent review, peer reviews, and a comparison of forecasted data to actual data. However, documentation of these steps is incomplete and, therefore, does not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate the credibility of the forecast results. Without adequate documentation, the Army cannot show that it has taken sufficient steps to ensure the model's credibility in terms of its forecasting capability; consequently, there exists a risk that the forecasts it produces may be inaccurate or misleading. Furthermore, without documentation of CIVFORS's forecasting capability, it may be difficult for DOD and other federal organizations to accurately determine its suitability for their use.