



Highlights of [GAO-05-69SP](#)

Why GAO Convened This Forum

There is widespread agreement that the federal government faces a range of challenges in the 21st century that it must confront to enhance performance, ensure accountability, and position the nation for the future. Federal agencies will need the most effective human capital systems to address these challenges and succeed in their transformation efforts during a period of likely sustained budget constraints.

More progress in addressing human capital challenges was made in the last 3 years than in the last 20, and significant changes in how the federal workforce is managed are underway.

On April 14, 2004, GAO and the National Commission on the Public Service Implementation Initiative hosted a forum with selected executive branch officials, key stakeholders, and other experts to help advance the discussion concerning how governmentwide human capital reform should proceed.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-69SP

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

HIGHLIGHTS OF A FORUM

Human Capital: Principles, Criteria, and Processes for Governmentwide Federal Human Capital Reform

What Participants Said

Forum participants discussed (1) Should there be a governmentwide framework for human capital reform? and (2) If yes, what should a governmentwide framework include?

There was widespread recognition that a “one size fits all” approach to human capital management is not appropriate for the challenges and demands government faces. However, there was equally broad agreement that there should be a governmentwide framework to guide human capital reform built on a set of beliefs that entail fundamental principles and boundaries that include criteria and processes that establish the checks and limitations when agencies seek and implement their authorities. While there were divergent views among the participants, there was general agreement that the following served as a starting point for further discussion in developing a governmentwide framework to advance needed human capital reform.

Principles

- Merit principles that balance organizational mission, goals, and performance objectives with individual rights and responsibilities
- Ability to organize, bargain collectively, and participate through labor organizations
- Certain prohibited personnel practices
- Guaranteed due process that is fair, fast, and final

Criteria

- Demonstrated business case or readiness for use of targeted authorities
- An integrated approach to results-oriented strategic planning and human capital planning and management
- Adequate resources for planning, implementation, training, and evaluation
- A modern, effective, credible, and integrated performance management system that includes adequate safeguards to ensure equity and prevent discrimination

Processes

- Prescribing regulations in consultation or jointly with the Office of Personnel Management
- Establishing appeals processes in consultation with the Merit Systems Protection Board
- Involving employees and stakeholders in the design and implementation of new human capital systems
- Phasing in implementation of new human capital systems
- Committing to transparency, reporting, and evaluation
- Establishing a communications strategy
- Assuring adequate training