



Highlights of [GAO-03-679](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Telework—work done at a location other than a traditional office—has gained widespread attention over the past decade as a human capital flexibility offering various potential benefits to employers, employees, and society. Using such flexibilities as management tools can help the federal government address its human capital challenges. GAO did this study in response to a congressional request to assess the federal government's progress in implementing telework programs and to determine what else can be done to give federal employees the ability to telework under appropriate circumstances.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO makes recommendations to the Director, OPM, and the Administrator, GSA, regarding further guidance and assistance they can provide to executive agencies in implementing telework programs. In joint comments, the administrator and director generally agreed with our recommendations and committed to taking steps towards their implementation. Both agencies disagreed with several findings on both their governmentwide and internal telework efforts. Comments from the Secretary, VA, and Director, Human Resources Services, Education, also generally agreed with our report, but VA disagreed with several findings. Our characterizations were generally accurate, but we made changes in response to agencies' comments, as appropriate.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-679](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-679).

To view the full report, 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](mailto:mihmj@gao.gov).

## HUMAN CAPITAL

# Further Guidance, Assistance, and Coordination Can Improve Federal Telework Efforts

## What GAO Found

The statutory framework for federal telework requires agencies to take certain actions related to telework, provides agencies with tools for supporting telework, and provides both the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the General Services Administration (GSA) with lead roles and shared responsibilities for the federal telework initiative. Both agencies offer services and resources to support and encourage telework in the federal government. However, these agencies have not fully coordinated their telework efforts and have had difficulty in resolving their conflicting views on telework-related matters. As a consequence, agencies have not received consistent, inclusive, unambiguous support and guidance related to telework.

After we discussed the issues created by the lack of coordination between GSA and OPM with both agencies, a GSA official then indicated that GSA and OPM expressed a new commitment to coordination. Such a commitment reflects a promising start for better assisting federal agencies in improved implementation of their telework programs. However, the key to success will be sustained efforts by both agencies to work together in assisting agencies and providing consistent and straightforward guidance, services, and resources on the governmentwide telework initiative.

GAO identified 25 key practices in telework-related literature and guidelines as those that federal agencies should implement in developing telework programs and grouped these practices under seven categories. While the four selected executive agencies we reviewed—the Department of Education (Education), GSA, OPM, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—have taken at least some steps to implement most of the key practices, only 7 of the 25 key practices, such as establishing a cross-functional project team and establishing an agencywide telework policy, had been fully implemented by all four agencies.

Although some telework-related resources from GSA and OPM provide federal agencies with information on how to implement several of the key practices we identified, agencies may need additional guidance, guidelines, and/or individualized technical support to fully implement these practices.