



Highlights of [GAO-09-616T](#), a testimony before the subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

Since 2001, Department of Defense's (DOD) spending on goods and services has more than doubled to \$388 billion in 2008, while the number of civilian and military acquisition personnel has remained relatively stable. To augment its in-house workforce, DOD relies heavily on contractor personnel. If it does not maintain an adequate workforce, DOD places its billion-dollar acquisitions at an increased risk of poor outcomes and vulnerability to fraud, waste, and abuse.

This testimony is based on GAO's March 2009 report and addresses DOD's efforts to assess the sufficiency of the total acquisition workforce and to improve its management and oversight of that workforce. It also discusses selected practices of leading organizations that may provide DOD with insights for its efforts.

### What GAO Recommends

In its March 2009 report, GAO recommended the Secretary of Defense, among other things, collect data on contractor personnel and identify the total acquisition workforce that the department needs to meet its missions. DOD concurred with three of the recommendations and noted that implementing the other requires careful consideration.

View [GAO-09-616T](#) or key components. For more information, contact John K. Needham at (202) 512-5274 or [needhamjk1@gao.gov](mailto:needhamjk1@gao.gov).

## ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

### Additional Actions and Data Needed for DOD to Improve Its Management and Oversight

#### What GAO Found

Although contractor personnel are a key segment of its total acquisition workforce, DOD lacks critical departmentwide information on the use and skill sets of these personnel. DOD also lacks information on why contractor personnel are used, which limits its ability to determine whether decisions to use contractors to augment the in-house acquisition workforce are appropriate. GAO found that program office decisions to use contractor personnel are often driven by factors such as quicker hiring time frames and civilian staffing limits, rather than by the skills needed or the nature or criticality of the work. In comparison with DOD's practices, leading organizations maintain and analyze data on their contractor personnel and take a business-oriented approach to determining when to use contractor support.

**Personnel in Acquisition-Related Functions as Reported by Selected Program Offices in 2008**

Organization (number of program offices)	Total (military, civilian, and contractor personnel)	Contractor personnel	
		Number	Percentage of total
Air Force (19)	1,549	467	30
Army (12)	1,723	373	22
Navy and Marine Corps (18)	2,374	940	40
Joint Programs (9)	1,460	688	47
Missile Defense Agency (8)	1,656	809	49
<b>Total (66)</b>	<b>8,762</b>	<b>3,277</b>	<b>37</b>

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

DOD also lacks key pieces of information that limit its ability to determine gaps in the acquisition workforce it needs to meet its missions. For example, DOD lacks information on the use and skill sets of contractor personnel, and lacks complete information on the skill sets of its in-house personnel. Not having this data not only skews analyses of workforce gaps, but also limits DOD's ability to make informed workforce allocation decisions and determine whether the total acquisition workforce—in-house and contractor personnel—is sufficient to accomplish its mission. In comparison with DOD's practices, leading organizations identify gaps in the workforce by assessing the competencies of its workforce and comparing those with the overall competencies the organization needs to achieve its objectives.

DOD recently initiated several efforts aimed at improving the management and oversight of its acquisition workforce, such as establishing practices for overseeing additional hiring, recruiting, and retention activities. In addition, the Secretary of Defense announced that DOD will begin to increase the size of the acquisition workforce by converting 11,000 contractor personnel to government positions and hiring an additional 9,000 government personnel by 2015. However, these initiatives may not provide the comprehensive information DOD needs to manage and oversee its acquisition workforce.