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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-07-1004](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is engaged in efforts to replace the Space Shuttle with the next generation of human space flight systems and implement the President's space exploration policy. To do this, NASA must recruit, develop, and retain certain critical skills in its workforce, guided by its strategic human capital management plan. GAO was asked to examine the extent to which NASA (1) has aligned its human capital planning framework with its strategic mission and programmatic goals and (2) is recruiting, developing, and retaining critically skilled personnel, given future workforce needs. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed NASA's policies, planning, and implementation documents; reviewed budget documents and performance and accountability reports; and interviewed cognizant agency officials. To assess NASA's efforts to recruit, develop, and retain critically skilled personnel, we analyzed demographics data, and critical skills information; NASA's policy, procedures and guidance for recruiting and hiring; and implementation of information systems programs, and processes that support human capital management and planning. We are not making any recommendations in this report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1004.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cristina Chaplain, 202-512-4841, or chaplainc@gao.gov.

NASA

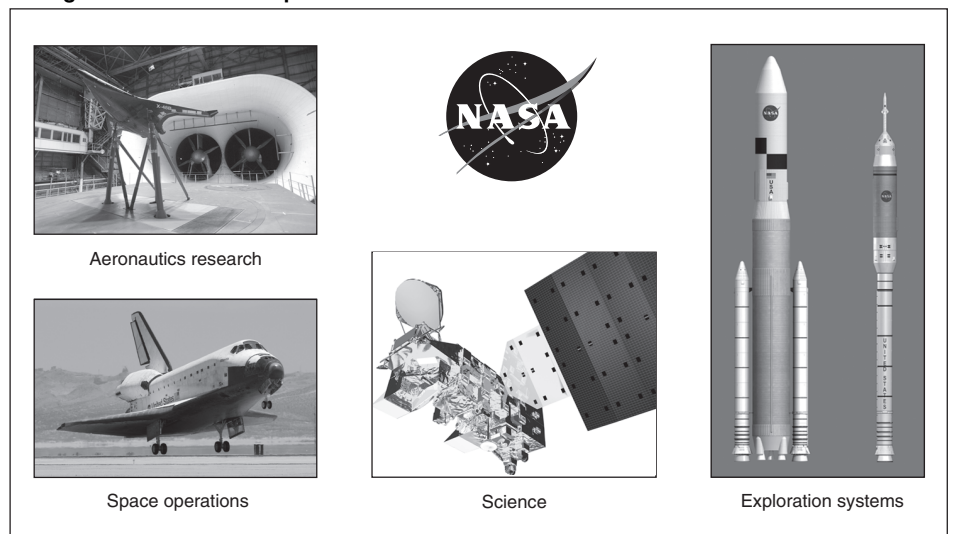
Progress Made on Strategic Human Capital Management, but Future Program Challenges Remain

What GAO Found

NASA's strategic human capital framework is generally aligned with its strategic mission, outcomes, and programmatic goals. NASA's leaders have set its overall direction and goals and involved its mission directorates and centers in implementing human capital strategy and providing feedback to headquarters. Recently, NASA has been improving its workforce planning information technology matching program requirements with human capital resources. Some centers have been critical of the systems' performance, but others find these tools useful.

NASA attracts and retains critical personnel by using tools such as recruiting and retention bonuses. Recently, NASA has asked Congress for additional human capital flexibilities to help manage its workforce. The centers also have their own programs that address their critical skills shortfalls by training and developing employees. NASA recognizes that critical skills now present in the civil service and contractor Space Shuttle workforce are needed to complete present and future mission objectives, but also understands that additional capability will also be needed in certain areas. Given this, NASA is looking ahead and considering how best to mitigate any potential loss of skills and knowledge that could take place in the period between the Space Shuttle's retirement in 2010 and the resumption of human space flight in 2015.

NASA needs to manage its workforce to maintain core technical capabilities as it works through retirement of the Space Shuttle to enable it to achieve its missions



Source: NASA.