



# HUMAN CAPITAL

## Building Diversity in GAO's Senior Executive Service

Highlights of [GAO-08-275T](#), a testimony to the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia

### Why GAO Did This Study

A high-performance organization relies on a dynamic workforce with the requisite talents, multi-disciplinary knowledge, and up-to-date skills to ensure that it is equipped to accomplish its mission and achieve its goals. For GAO having a diverse workforce and Senior Executive Service (SES) corps is an organizational strength that contributes to the achievement of results by bringing a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to policy development and implementation, strategic planning, problem solving, and decision making. The Office of Opportunity and Inclusiveness (O&I) was created by the Comptroller General in 2001 to transform the agency's diversity management practices. As such O&I is the principal adviser to the Comptroller General on diversity and equal opportunity matter.

The subcommittee asked us to provide information on the diversity of GAO's Senior Executive Service and the agency's succession planning efforts. This testimony focuses on the diversity of GAO's workforce and leadership team and our efforts and processes for building and maintaining diversity in our SES and throughout our workforce.

### What GAO Found

As our transformational diversity efforts have been implemented, the diversity of GAO's workforce and leadership team—SES/SL and Band III level staff—has improved. In 2000, minorities represented about 14 percent of the SES/SL corps. As of fiscal year 2007, about 18 percent of the SES members were minorities. Similarly, the representation of minorities at the Band III level—the SES feeder pool—increased from nearly 12 percent in 2000 to nearly 19 percent in 2007, and the representation of women in the SES as well as at the Band III and Band II levels increased.

While we have made progress, we still have work to do. We are committed to improving the representation of all minority groups in the leadership team and in particular, representation of Hispanic and Asian American staff should be improved. The percentages of GAO's Hispanic staff members at the SES level and Asian American staff at the Band III level were lower than governmentwide percentages. However, for both of these groups, the percentages in the feeder pools—staff at the Band III and Band IIB levels—either equaled or exceeded the governmentwide percentages.

Several processes help build and maintain diversity in GAO's SES and workforce. Incorporating our core diversity principles into several key processes has played an important role in helping GAO to meet its strategic objective to build and maintain a work environment that is fair, unbiased and inclusive and that offers the opportunity for all employees to realize their full potential. Our workforce planning and recruitment processes, training opportunities, reviews of human capital processes conducted by O&I, and the selection process for SES candidates help support our efforts to maintain and improve diversity in our SES.



Source: GAO.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-275T](#). For more information, contact Ronald A. Stroman at 202-512-6388 or [stroman@gao.gov](mailto:stroman@gao.gov).