



Highlights of [GAO-08-1160T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

For GAO, having a diverse workforce at all levels 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. GAO's Office of Opportunity and Inclusiveness (O&I) is responsible for all functions and activities designed to promote diversity and maintain a work environment that is fair, unbiased, and inclusive. O&I's analysis of performance appraisal data indicated that there were significant differences in appraisal averages for African American and Caucasian analysts. GAO contracted with the Ivy Planning Group to assess the factors that influenced the differences. Ivy issued its African American Performance Assessment Study report on April 25, 2008 and the Acting Comptroller General issued a memorandum on April 30, 2008 expressing his commitment to addressing all of the report's recommendations.

The subcommittee asked GAO's Inspector General (IG) to examine the effectiveness of O&I and analyze the representation of women and minorities in the agency's Senior Executive Service (SES) and managerial ranks (GS-15 and equivalent level). This testimony focuses on the results of the IG's review and provides information on actions taken and planned to further enhance diversity at GAO.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1160T](#). For more information, contact Ronald A. Stroman at 202-512-8401 or [stromanr@gao.gov](mailto:stromanr@gao.gov).

## DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

### Important Actions Taken and Planned to Further Enhance Diversity

#### What GAO Found

The Inspector General's (IG) report recognizes the gains GAO has made to enhance the profile of its SES and managerial ranks. The report notes that the representation of most groups in GAO's SES and managerial ranks exceeded or equaled the representation in either the civilian labor force or the executive branch agencies. For example, the percentages of African Americans at the SES level and at the GS-15 and equivalent level exceeded the percentages in both the civilian labor force as well as in the executive branch agencies. The report also acknowledges that GAO has implemented many of the leading diversity management practices. Additionally, the report includes four recommendations that GAO has already taken steps to implement. For example, GAO is revising the discrimination complaint process order to clarify responsibilities and procedures when a complaint concerns O&I staff, and strengthening its internal controls for tracking, reviewing, and reporting on complaint data.

In addition to implementing the recommendations in the IG's report, GAO has taken steps to address many of the recommendations in the African American Performance Assessment Study report prepared by the Ivy Planning Group. The report included more than 25 recommendations. The Acting Comptroller General has committed to addressing all of them and issued a memorandum on September 10, 2008 that highlighted the progress made. For example, GAO has developed an approach for convening a series of facilitated conversations on race, begun to reassess the appraisal system, created standards for appraisal reviews, and taken steps to strengthen its recruitment and retention initiatives.

Furthermore, GAO plans to take additional steps to enhance its diversity by completing actions in its Workforce Diversity Plan. In June 2008, GAO issued a detailed Workforce Diversity Plan designed to build on the gains made in the diversity of its management and overall workforce. The plan lists about 20 actions that the agency will take. For example, the plan requires that GAO develop a diversity recruitment plan and calls for GAO to develop stronger relationships with Hispanic Serving Institutions and organizations that work with disabled students.

GAO is committed to working closely with all employees to ensure its diversity efforts and work environment are fully inclusive. GAO has established a comprehensive accountability framework to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Ivy report recommendations and the workforce diversity plan action steps. GAO has taken many steps and plans to take others to help enhance its diversity, recognizing that diversity is a journey that will require constant and sustained commitment.