



Highlights of [GAO-08-1098](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why IG Did This Study

GAO, like other federal agencies, faces challenges in increasing diversity in its workforce, including top leadership. Because of your interest in the effectiveness of diversity offices and the underrepresentation of women and minorities in legislative branch agencies, you asked GAO's Inspector General (IG) to (1) determine whether GAO's diversity efforts are achieving better representation of women and minorities in top leadership, (2) evaluate the accuracy and completeness of GAO's fiscal year 2007 complaint and discrimination data, and (3) assess the independence and reporting relationship of the head of GAO's Office of Opportunity and Inclusiveness (OOI).

In response, GAO's IG reviewed relevant orders, documents, and data and interviewed officials at GAO and GAO's Personnel Appeals Board (PAB)—the adjudicative body for GAO employees who appeal agency equal employment opportunity-related (EEO) decisions—and other parties.

What IG Recommends

To improve diversity in SES and manager ranks, the IG recommends GAO establish a formal policy to annually produce a *Workforce Diversity Plan* to more effectively manage its diversity activities. To accurately report on complaint data, GAO should revise relevant orders, procedures, and internal controls. GAO generally agreed with the recommendations in our draft.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1098](#). For more information, contact Frances Garcia at (202) 512-5748 or garciaf@gao.gov.

DIVERSITY AT GAO

Sustained Attention Needed to Build on Gains in SES and Managers

What IG Found

Overall, GAO made gains in the representation of women and minorities in both its SES and manager (GS-15) ranks, and equivalent positions, between fiscal years 2002 and 2007. Furthermore, the agency's SES and managers in fiscal year 2007 were generally more diverse in comparison with executive branch agencies and the civilian labor force. Top management has made a commitment to increasing the diversity of its workforce and has implemented many leading diversity management practices. GAO has taken steps to identify, examine and address potential barriers to the hiring and advancement of women and minorities. Last year, the agency began work to examine disparities in the average ratings between African-American and Caucasian analysts, including those at the manager level. In June 2008, GAO issued its congressionally mandated *Workforce Diversity Plan*, which analyzed the demographic composition of the agency's entire workforce and identified potential barriers to the advancement and hiring of minorities. As a result, GAO has baseline data to assess its future diversity efforts and an action plan for the next year to address gaps in minority representation. The Acting Comptroller General intends for the agency to annually prepare this plan, which will provide critical information for diversity management.

GAO's fiscal year 2007 complaint and discrimination data in GAO's March 2008 report to Congress included errors. For example, the report showed one complaint and one complainant more than were found in GAO's files. Also, we could not verify the reported average annual number of days for processing complaints. Moreover, we found that, earlier this year, GAO did not include accurate fiscal year 2007 complaint data on its Web site, as required by law. Rather, GAO posted first quarter fiscal year 2008 complaint data as if it were the full year data for fiscal 2007. GAO has corrected the data and posted the updated data to both its Web site and intranet. These errors were primarily the result of how GAO tracks complaints and other insufficient internal controls over the compilation and reporting of data.

GAO voluntarily follows two of three Equal Employment Opportunity Commission requirements for executive branch agencies regarding the independence and reporting relationships of EEO office heads. At GAO, the head of OOI reports directly to GAO's chief executive—the Comptroller General—and conducts legal reviews of the agency's final decisions on complaints independent of GAO's in-house legal staff. Regarding the third requirement, GAO's PAB has raised concerns about the involvement of OOI's head in both complaint processing and diversity efforts. PAB is concerned this is a potential conflict of interest and has recommended that GAO create a separate unit solely to process complaints. GAO management has not adopted PAB's recommendation, saying it is not an efficient use of resources, given the low number of formal EEO complaints OOI processes and the outsourcing of its complaint investigations. The scope of this review did not include a detailed analysis of OOI to determine what effect, if any, the consolidation of these functions has had on complaint processing.