

Why GAO Did This Study

DOJ annually awards billions of dollars to thousands of grant recipients, which presents administrative and workload challenges for DOJ's workforce. In May 2011, DOJ's grant-making components began deploying new staffing models to analyze their workloads and better ensure that staffing levels and personnel assignments reflect their responsibilities. In November 2011, the conference report accompanying DOJ's FY 2012 appropriation directed GAO to evaluate each component's staffing model. In response, this report addresses (1) the extent to which the grant-making components incorporated leading practices to ensure that their staffing models are sound and reliable and (2) the components' use of the models to inform their workforce planning efforts, and the extent to which they used the models for budget development. GAO reviewed the staffing models the components procured under contract in 2011, and the updated, 2012 versions; identified six leading practices based on our prior work for ensuring the models' soundness and reliability; and assessed the components' actions for meeting each practice. GAO also interviewed component officials about their use of the models.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOJ components fully incorporate leading practices to help ensure their staffing models' soundness and reliability, and develop and implement a strategy for using the models to inform workforce planning and budget development. DOJ agreed with these recommendations and reported it would take actions to address them.

View [GAO-13-92](#). For more information, contact David C. Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or maurerd@gao.gov.

DOJ WORKFORCE PLANNING

Grant-Making Components Should Enhance the Utility of Their Staffing Models

What GAO Found

The Department of Justice's (DOJ) three grant-making components—the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW)—have partially met five of six leading practices, and fully met another, to ensure that the staffing models the contractor prepared for each of them to assess their workloads and workforce capacities are sound and reliable. These six leading practices are broad areas that represent a summary of the activities that should take place during the three stages of model design, development, and deployment. For example, the components partially met the leading practice for ensuring the credibility of data used in the models. This practice includes both verifying with staff that the models accurately depict the component's operations—an activity in which they fully engaged—and testing the models for logic and accuracy—an activity in which they partially engaged. Specifically, the components did not comprehensively check all of the models' formulas, and GAO found errors with all three components' models' retirement calculations. When left uncorrected, such errors have implications for workforce-related decisions and, ultimately, can affect the efficiency and effectiveness of component operations. In contrast, the components fully met one leading practice and its associated activities for leveraging stakeholders. For example, all three components engaged grant managers and senior program officials when working with the contractor to apply their knowledge and experience to design and develop the models. Moving forward, fully incorporating leading practices when updating the models for future use will better position the grant-making components to capitalize on the models' capacity and facilitate effective workforce planning and budgeting.

Due to the deficiencies GAO identified in the design, development, and deployment of the staffing models, grant-making components have not used the models to identify workforce gaps or to inform the preparation of annual budget requests. In particular, the three grant-making components have not used the models to determine critical skills and competencies of staff and identify related gaps. Further, officials from all three components stated that they would like to, or plan to, use the models to inform the upcoming fiscal year 2015 budget requests, but they do not yet have a strategy for doing so. For example, officials from all three grant-making components recognize that their human capital staff will need to share and interpret the data in the models with their budget staff, but as of late September 2012, no time frames, coordination principles, or guidance were in place to ensure this exchange of information. Standard practices for project management, including budget development, involve the establishment of timelines, coordination principles, and guidance. Developing, documenting, and implementing a strategy that includes these elements could help the grant-making components better use the models to inform budget development. In particular, such a strategy should account for the full incorporation of leading practices to ensure the models are sound and reliable and that the quantifiable data from the models provide the proper context and justification to the Congress for the funding levels the components request.