



July 2014

# HUMAN CAPITAL

## DOD Should Fully Develop Its Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan to Aid Decision Makers

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# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-14-565](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Strategic workforce planning can help DOD determine whether it has the civilian personnel with the necessary skills and competencies to perform a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, including mission-essential combat-support functions, such as logistics and maintenance, that traditionally have been performed by uniformed military personnel. In 2006, Congress enacted a requirement for DOD to produce strategic workforce plans, and GAO first reported on DOD's plans in 2008. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 mandates that GAO report to Congress on these plans.

GAO evaluated the extent to which (1) DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed statutory requirements; and (2) DOD's plan is consistent with key strategic workforce-planning principles. GAO examined DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan and associated documents, relevant legislation, and key strategic workforce-planning principles, and interviewed officials from across the department involved in producing the plan.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD align its workforce plans with the budget process and other workforce management initiatives. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendation.

View [GAO-14-565](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or [farrellb@gao.gov](mailto:farrellb@gao.gov).

July 2014

## HUMAN CAPITAL

### DOD Should Fully Develop Its Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan to Aid Decision Makers

## What GAO Found

The Department of Defense's (DOD) Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed or partially addressed 27 of the 32 statutory reporting requirements and did not address 5 of the requirements. The statute requires DOD, for example, to conduct assessments of critical skills and competencies, to assess gaps in the workforce, and to assess the appropriate mix of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities. DOD has taken steps to address many of its reporting requirements since 2008. However, DOD has not yet addressed the requirement to assess the appropriate mix of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities in its plan, as shown in the table below. GAO previously has made 10 recommendations regarding statutory compliance covering a range of issues. In addition to recommending that DOD conduct the required assessments, GAO also has recommended providing clearer guidance for developing the plan and enhancing performance measures and is not making further recommendations related to statutory compliance at this time.

**Extent to Which DOD Addressed Statutory Requirements in Its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan**

Workforce	Requirements		
	Addressed	Partially addressed	Not addressed
Overall Civilian	3	6	1
Civilian Senior Leader	4	7	1
Financial Management	1	6	3

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565

Note: Data are from DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan. DOD was statutorily required to provide a plan for its overall civilian workforce, as well as separate chapters on its Civilian Senior Leader and Financial Management workforces.

DOD's strategic workforce plan does not fully incorporate key strategic workforce-planning principles. There are six key strategic workforce-planning principles, and most are similar to elements of the statutory reporting requirements, such as assessing critical skills and competencies. A key principle that is not addressed in the statutory requirements is strategic alignment, which links workforce strategies to an agency's mission and goals, and aligns them with, among other things, budget formulation. DOD's 2013-2018 plan noted the need to integrate the department's plan with the budget process but did not include specific details and, according to officials, DOD does not have actions underway to do so. Further, the plan identified strategies addressing some critical-skill staffing gaps, but did not provide specific information on the funding required to implement most of these strategies. The plan also did not align with recent recruiting, retention, and readiness initiatives to improve the morale of DOD's civilian workforce as reported to congressional defense committees. Without aligning its workforce plan with the budget process and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting and retention issues associated with declining morale, the department will not be in the best position to make informed management and resource decisions about its workforce.

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## Abbreviation

DOD	Department of Defense
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July 09, 2014

## Congressional Committees

Current budget and long-term fiscal pressures necessitate that federal government agencies, including the Department of Defense (DOD), operate more strategically and efficiently than ever before, and this includes cost-effective management of human-capital policies and practices. We have previously reported that strategic workforce planning—an integral part of human-capital management—helps organizations like DOD determine whether they have personnel with the necessary skills and competencies to achieve organizational missions and strategic goals.<sup>1</sup> For fiscal year 2015, DOD budgeted approximately \$74 billion for a civilian workforce of approximately 782,000 full-time equivalents.<sup>2</sup> DOD's civilian workforce performs a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, including mission-essential combat-support functions—such as logistics, support, and maintenance—that traditionally have been performed by the uniformed military. To successfully address such complex challenges as national security, and other evolving national issues, it is necessary for DOD to attract and retain skilled personnel. Three important elements of workforce planning include determining the critical skills and competencies necessary to achieve programmatic goals, conducting gap analyses, and developing strategies that are tailored to address any identified gaps.

In 2001, we added strategic human-capital management for all federal civilians—including those at DOD—to our High-Risk List because of the long-standing lack of leadership commitment in this area.<sup>3</sup> While the Office of Personnel Management, individual agencies such as DOD, and Congress have taken important steps over the last few years to better position the government to close current and emerging critical skills gaps that are undermining agencies' abilities to meet their vital missions, the

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<sup>1</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: DOD Needs Complete Assessments to Improve Future Civilian Strategic Workforce Plans*, [GAO-12-1014](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

<sup>2</sup>A full-time equivalent is a standard measure of labor that equates to 1 year of full-time work, which is defined in terms of labor hours by the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11 each year.

<sup>3</sup>GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-01-263](#) (Washington D.C.: January 2001).

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area remains high risk because more work is needed in implementing specific corrective strategies for addressing critical skills gaps and evaluating their results.<sup>4</sup>

Our body of work on strategic workforce planning has shown the importance of having the right people, with the right skills, doing the right jobs, in the right places, at the right time. We first reported on DOD's need for strategic workforce plans for its civilian workforce in 2004, and since have published several reports on DOD's strategic workforce plans.<sup>5</sup> In February 2008, we found that DOD did not address most statutory requirements in its strategic workforce plan, and recommended that DOD submit a plan that addresses all the statutory requirements.<sup>6</sup> DOD disagreed with our recommendation and stated that its plan reflected a centralized enterprise-wide strategic perspective, while acknowledging it did not necessarily provide the information specified by the law. Subsequently, in February 2009, we found that DOD partially addressed each of the statutory requirements that existed then and recommended that DOD develop performance plans, to include implementation goals and time frames, for its program offices that have responsibilities to oversee development of the strategic workforce plan. DOD partially concurred with our recommendation and noted that efforts were underway at that time to develop performance plans. More recently, in September 2010 and again in September 2012, we found that, although DOD had demonstrated some progress in addressing the legislative requirements related to its Civilian Human Capital Strategic Workforce Plan, several key elements continued to be missing from the process—including such elements as competency-gap analyses and monitoring of progress. We discuss DOD's progress on the plan and related areas—including DOD's response and any recommendations implemented—in further detail later in this report.

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<sup>4</sup>GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Update*, [GAO-13-283](#) (Washington D.C.: February 2013).

<sup>5</sup>GAO, *DOD Civilian Personnel: Comprehensive Strategic Workforce Plan Needed*, [GAO-04-753](#) (Washington D.C.: June 30, 2004); *The Department of Defense's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan Does Not Meet Most Statutory Requirements*, [GAO-08-439R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 6, 2008); *Human Capital: Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan*, [GAO-09-235](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 10, 2009); *Human Capital: Further Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan*, [GAO-10-814R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2010); and [GAO-12-1014](#).

<sup>6</sup>[GAO-08-439R](#).

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Within the last decade, Congress has passed and amended legislation requiring DOD to conduct strategic human capital planning efforts for the department's overall civilian workforce, its Civilian Senior Leader workforce, and its Financial Management workforce.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code (Section 115b), enacted in October 2009, requires DOD to develop and submit to congressional defense committees on a biennial basis a strategic workforce plan to shape and improve the department's civilian workforce, and includes a list of specific reporting requirements such as conducting assessments of current and future critical skills and competencies of DOD's civilian workforce.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 mandates GAO to report to congressional defense committees on DOD's plan within 180 days of its submission.<sup>8</sup> In September 2013, DOD issued its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan. This report evaluates the extent to which (1) DOD's latest plan addresses the statutory reporting requirements of Section 115b, and (2) DOD's plan is consistent with key strategic workforce-planning principles.

To determine the extent to which DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addresses statutory requirements, we evaluated the plan and supporting documentation to determine whether the plan addresses, partially addresses, or does not address each of the required elements. To make these determinations, two GAO analysts independently evaluated DOD's plan, and then met to resolve differences in their respective independent analyses. The team subsequently provided the consolidated final evaluation to our Office of General Counsel for its review of our assessment of the statutory requirements. We then discussed the results of our analysis with officials from the Strategic Human Capital Planning Office in the Defense Civilian Personnel

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<sup>7</sup>The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-84, § 1108 (2009) (codified as amended at 10 U.S.C. 115b) codified a previous strategic workforce plan requirement that was originally enacted by section 1122 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-163 (2006). This is the last of DOD's Strategic Workforce Plans we are mandated to evaluate. The legislation also requires DOD to conduct strategic human-capital planning efforts for the department's acquisition workforce, which DOD addresses in a separate report to Congress.

<sup>8</sup>Pub. L. No. 111-84, § 1108 (2009).



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Advisory Service, within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, who are responsible for developing the plan.

To determine the extent to which DOD's plan is consistent with key strategic workforce planning principles, we compared DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan with key principles of effective strategic workforce planning.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, we selected two key principles—aligning workforce planning with strategic planning and budget formulation and involving stakeholders, among others, in developing, communicating, and implementing the strategic workforce plan—that do not overlap with the statutory requirements. Additionally, we selected two other key principles—determining the critical skills and competencies needed to achieve current and future programmatic results and developing strategies that are tailored to address gaps—because they are integral to developing a comprehensive strategic workforce plan and because we have consistently found that DOD has not yet completed actions to address issues related to them. We interviewed officials from the Strategic Human Capital Planning Office to obtain information on DOD's approach to strategic workforce planning. We also interviewed officials in 3 of DOD's 22 functional communities to obtain additional perspective on their approaches.<sup>10</sup>

The three communities included (1) the Civilian Senior Leader functional community, (2) the Financial Management functional community, and (3) the Intelligence functional community. We selected these communities because DOD is required specifically to include information about its Civilian Senior Leader and its Financial Management workforces in its Strategic Workforce Plan, and because our 2012 review of DOD's 2010 Strategic Workforce Plan<sup>11</sup> found that the department's Intelligence

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<sup>9</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*, [GAO-04-39](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2003) and *A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management*, [GAO-02-373SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002). See also Office of Personnel Management, *Introduction to the HCAAF Practitioners Guide* (September 2005). These principles were developed based on GAO's prior reports and testimonies examining best practices in strategic human-capital management, review of studies by leading workforce-planning organizations, and interviews with officials from the Office of Personnel Management and other federal agencies.

<sup>10</sup>DOD defines a functional community as employees who perform similar functions; functional communities are discussed further in the background section of this report.

<sup>11</sup>[GAO-12-1014](#).

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functional community did not provide the mandated workforce assessments or plan of action for shaping and improving that workforce. We also selected the three communities to better understand how each of their plans was developed based on the stated criteria. However, our selection of these 3 functional communities does not constitute a representative sample of DOD's 22 functional communities. Thus, while the results cannot be projected to all functional communities, they did provide us with important insights. We also evaluated DOD's processes for conducting the strategic workforce planning efforts for these three functional communities as part of the larger DOD strategic workforce plan, including relevant instructions or guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We then evaluated the data presented in the plan to assess the extent to which DOD's latest plan is consistent with key strategic workforce-planning principles; however, we did not assess the underlying accuracy of DOD's data.

We conducted this performance audit from September 2013 to July 2014 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. A full discussion of our scope and methodology is presented in appendix I.

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## Background

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### Statutory Requirements for DOD's Strategic Workforce Plan

Section 115b requires that the Secretary of Defense submit to the congressional defense committees, in every even-numbered year, a strategic workforce plan to shape and improve the civilian employee workforce of DOD. The statute assigns overall responsibility for developing and implementing the plan to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In turn, the Under Secretary has assigned responsibility for developing the plan to the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service. The plan is required to include, among other things, assessments of DOD's existing and projected civilian workforce, and a plan of action to address gaps in critical skills and competencies identified in those assessments.

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Section 115b further requires DOD to include in its strategic workforce plan specific information on its Civilian Senior Leader—senior management, functional, and technical—workforces. DOD’s senior management, functional, and technical workforces consist of five career Civilian Senior Leader workforces,<sup>12</sup> which DOD relies on to operate and oversee nearly every activity in the department. These workforces include the following:

- Senior Executive Service workforce. Most of the department relies on these officials to fill positions with managerial, supervisory, or policy advisory responsibilities.
- Senior Level workforce. These officials fill positions that typically require less than 25 percent of their time to be spent on supervisory or related managerial responsibilities. Most Senior Level employees are in nonexecutive positions whose duties are broad and complex enough to be classified above the GS-15 level.
- Senior Technical workforce. These officials perform high-level research and development in the physical, biological, medical, and engineering science fields.
- Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service workforce. These officials fill positions with managerial, supervisory, or policy advisory responsibilities in the Intelligence functional community that falls within DOD.
- Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforce. These officials fill senior positions within DOD’s Intelligence community that require less than 25 percent of their time to be spent on managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Section 1053 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012<sup>13</sup> added a requirement for DOD to include specific information on its Financial Management workforce in the department’s strategic workforce plan. That section requires that DOD include specific steps that the department has taken or plans to take to develop appropriate career paths for civilian employees in the financial-management field, and include a plan for funding improvements in the Financial Management workforce of the department through the period of the current Future

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<sup>12</sup>This report does not cover limited-term or temporary appointment DOD Civilian Senior Leaders, to include: (1) limited-term or temporary appointments within the Senior Executive Service; (2) certain temporary appointments of highly qualified experts; and (3) certain temporary appointments of scientists and engineers.

<sup>13</sup>Pub. L. No. 112-81 (2011).

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Years Defense Program, including a description of any continuing shortfalls in funding available for that workforce. DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan is the department's first plan that is to include information addressing this requirement. DOD's financial-management workforce was added to our High-Risk List in 1995.<sup>14</sup>

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## Key Principles of Effective Strategic Workforce Planning

Strategic workforce planning is an iterative, systematic process that addresses two critical needs: (1) aligning an organization's human-capital program with its current and emerging mission and programmatic goals and (2) developing long-term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff to achieve programmatic goals. While agencies' approaches to workforce planning vary, key principles of strategic workforce planning that should be addressed include the following:

- align workforce planning with strategic planning and budget formulation;
- involve top management, employees, and other stakeholders in developing, communicating, and implementing the strategic workforce plan;
- determine the critical skills and competencies that will be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results;
- develop strategies that are tailored to address gaps in number, deployment, and alignment of human-capital approaches for enabling and sustaining the contributions of all critical skills and competencies;
- build the capability needed to address administrative, educational, and other requirements important to support workforce planning strategies; and
- monitor and evaluate the agency's progress toward its human-capital goals and the contribution that human-capital results have made toward achieving programmatic results.<sup>15</sup>

With the exception of the first two principles, these principles are similar to elements of DOD's statutory reporting requirements.

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<sup>14</sup>GAO, *High-Risk Series: An Overview*, [GAO/HR-95-1](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 1995).

<sup>15</sup>[GAO-04-39](#). See also Office of Personnel Management, *Introduction to the HCAAF Practitioners Guide*.

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## DOD's Approach to Strategic Workforce Planning

To conduct strategic human-capital planning efforts for the department's civilian workforce, DOD's Strategic Human Capital Planning Office used functional community categories to group together employees who perform similar functions. In some cases, these communities include mission-critical occupations. For its 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, DOD identified 22 functional communities and provided information on 30 of its 32 mission-critical occupations.<sup>16</sup> DOD's approach to developing its strategic workforce plan includes meetings between functional community leadership and officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, an environmental scan as part of a continuous information-gathering process, and quarterly recruitment and retention data updates provided to the functional communities.

According to DOD's Strategic Workforce Plan, mission-critical occupations are occupations or occupational groups that set direction, directly impact, or execute performance of mission-critical functions or services. Further, mission-critical occupations are positions key to DOD's current and future mission requirements, as well as those that present recruiting and retention challenges. Appendix II shows DOD's functional communities and their associated mission-critical occupations.

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## Prior GAO Work Evaluating DOD's Strategic Workforce Plans

We have conducted assessments of DOD's strategic workforce plans since 2008, and our body of work has found that DOD's efforts to address strategic workforce planning requirements have been mixed.<sup>17</sup> In our February 2009 report, we recommended that the offices responsible for addressing DOD's strategic workforce-planning requirements develop performance plans that include establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources. DOD has since completed implementation of the actions it had underway at that time to develop performance plans. In our most recent

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<sup>16</sup>DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan identified 32 mission-critical occupations; however, the plan did not include the Acquisition Functional Community's assessment of its workforce due to that community's separate reporting requirements.

<sup>17</sup>For our prior work on DOD's strategic workforce planning efforts see [GAO-12-1014](#); *Human Capital: Complete Information and More Analyses Needed to Enhance DOD's Civilian Senior Leader Strategic Workforce Plan*, [GAO-12-990R](#) (Washington D.C.: Sept. 19, 2012); [GAO-09-235](#); and [GAO-08-439R](#).

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report in September 2012 on the department's overall civilian strategic workforce plan,<sup>18</sup> we recommended that DOD

- include in the guidance that it disseminates for developing future strategic workforce plans clearly defined terms and processes for conducting these assessments;
- conduct competency-gap analyses for DOD's mission-critical occupations and report the results;
- establish and adhere to timelines that will ensure issuance of future strategic workforce plans in accordance with statutory time frames;
- provide guidance for developing future strategic workforce plans that clearly directs the functional communities to collect information that identifies not only the number or percentage of personnel in its military, civilian, and contractor workforces but also the capabilities of the appropriate mix of those three workforces; and
- enhance the department's results-oriented performance measures by revising existing measures or developing additional measures that will more clearly align with DOD's efforts to monitor progress in meeting the strategic workforce-planning requirements in section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code.

DOD either concurred or partially concurred with the recommendations in our September 2012 report, stating that, among other things, the department was deliberate in applying lessons learned from previous workforce plans and identifying specific challenges and the actions being taken to address those challenges to meet statutory planning requirements by 2015.

In our September 2012 report on the department's Civilian Senior Leader strategic workforce plan, we recommended that DOD conduct assessments of the skills, competencies, and gaps within all five career Civilian Senior Leader workforces and report them in DOD's future strategic workforce plans.<sup>19</sup> DOD concurred with our recommendation and stated that the department fell short of conducting assessments of skills, competencies, and gaps within three of the five Civilian Senior Leader workforces as a result of their technical roles in the DOD leadership hierarchy, and that, as roles are refined, this work will be

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<sup>18</sup>[GAO-12-1014](#).

<sup>19</sup>[GAO-12-990R](#).

reflected in future plans as appropriate. The status of these and other prior recommendations may be found in appendix III.

DOD’s Plan Partially Addresses Most Statutory Requirements and Does Not Provide Comprehensive Workforce Information for Decision Makers

Our assessment of DOD’s Fiscal Years 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan found that DOD’s plan addresses 8 and partially addresses 19 of the 32 statutory requirements. The plan does not address 5 of the 32 statutory requirements. As a result, DOD’s plan does not provide decision makers with comprehensive information on DOD’s workforce. The 2013-2018 plan represents an improvement since 2008 when we found that DOD’s 2006-2010 Civilian Human Capital Strategic Workforce Plan did not meet six of eight statutory reporting requirements.<sup>20</sup> However, since 2008, Congress has expanded the number and scope of statutory requirements for DOD to include, among other things, details about its civilian senior-leader and financial-management workforces. Table 1 provides the results of our analysis of the extent to which DOD’s plan for the overall, civilian senior-leader, and financial-management workforces addressed the Section 115b statutory requirements.

Table 1: Extent to Which DOD Addressed Statutory Requirements in Its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan

Workforce	Requirements		
	Addressed	Partially Addressed	Not Addressed
Overall civilian	3	6	1
Civilian senior leader	4	7	1
Financial management	1	6	3
Total	8	19	5

Source: GAO’s analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565  
Note: Data are from DOD’s Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.

Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code requires DOD to develop a strategic workforce plan to shape and improve the civilian employee workforce of the department, to include specific elements such as an assessment of the current critical skills and competencies of the civilian workforce; any gaps in the existing or projected workforce; and the appropriate mix of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities. DOD also

<sup>20</sup>[GAO-08-439R](#).

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was required to identify the specific funding needed to achieve recruiting and retention goals, and the funding needed to implement strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian employee workforce of the department. In addition to addressing the overall civilian workforce, the legislation also requires the department to include separate chapters to address the shaping and improvement of specific workforces, including: (1) the Civilian Senior Leader workforce and (2) the Financial Management workforce. We summarize the results of our assessment of DOD's overall civilian, Civilian Senior Leader, and Financial Management workforce plans below. In addition, we provide detailed information in appendix IV on the extent to which the 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed the statutory requirements.

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## Overall Civilian Workforce

With regard to the overall civilian workforce, we found that DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addresses three of the statutory requirements, partially addresses six requirements, and does not address one requirement. For example, DOD's plan addressed the requirement to provide an assessment, using results-oriented performance measures, of the progress the department has made in implementing the plan in the prior year. Specifically, DOD's plan identified six performance measures the department is using to assess progress. These measures include, among others, (1) the percentage of workforce planning key milestones completed by each functional community, then aggregated across all communities; (2) the percentage difference between actual workforce levels and target workforce levels for the mission-critical occupations; and (3) the number of mission-critical occupations for which competency models will be developed and deployed by September 2014.

By contrast, DOD's overall civilian plan partially addresses, among others, the requirements to assess the department's critical skills and competencies of both the existing and future workforces. We found that DOD assessed its critical skills by identifying and providing information on the mission-critical occupations. However, DOD's plan did not include competency assessment information for most of the workforces. In subsequent discussions, DOD officials told us that, as of April 2014, the department had completed competency models for the current mission-critical occupations, but had not yet completed the assessments of the competencies associated with those occupations and, therefore, could not include the required assessments in the plan. Those officials also told us that they intend to include the results of these assessments in future strategic workforce plans.



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Finally, DOD's overall civilian workforce plan does not address the requirement to include an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. According to the plan, in fiscal year 2012 the department initiated a pilot study of the process to assess capabilities being delivered by the federal government career civilian workforce, military personnel, and contract support for three mission-critical occupations. Although the plan discussed the existence of this pilot program, it did not provide the actual assessment of those occupational series' mix of capabilities, as directed by the requirement. At the time of our review, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service officials told us that the plan did not include specific information on the results of the pilot because the program was being reevaluated during the fiscal year 2014-2019 Strategic Workforce Plan cycle and will be updated for future reporting. According to the plan, the department's goal is to assess a broad range of mission-critical occupation capabilities by fiscal year 2016, but the department did not provide further details on these plans, such as interim milestones or the number of mission critical occupations it intends to assess.

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## Civilian Senior Leader Workforce

With regard to the Civilian Senior Leader workforce, we found that DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addresses four of the statutory requirements, partially addresses seven requirements, and does not address one requirement. For example, DOD's plan addresses the requirement to include specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities. Specifically, DOD's plan identified the department's effort to revise the scope of its Defense Executive Advisory Board<sup>21</sup> to help the department maintain the caliber of its Senior Executive Service leadership. In addition, the plan discussed efforts by the department to promote diversity and interest among civilian employees to join the executive ranks.

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<sup>21</sup>The Department of Defense Executive Advisory Board is a board of Senior Executive Service leaders and general and flag officers across the components that advises the Deputy Secretary of Defense and other DOD senior leaders on the policy and management of Senior Executive Service career executives, as established by DOD Directive 1403.03, *The Career Lifecycle Management of the Senior Executive Service Leaders Within the Department of Defense* (Oct. 25, 2007).

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However, we found that the Civilian Senior Leader plan partially addresses, among others, the requirements to assess the critical skills and competencies of the current and future workforces because the plan only provided competency information for the Senior Executive Service. More specifically, the plan provided information on the 16 Office of Personnel Management government-wide competencies and 2 DOD-specific competencies for the Senior Executive Service, which includes strategic thinking, leveraging diversity, and developing others, among others. The department's plan did not, however, provide an assessment of the critical skills needed by the Civilian Senior Leader workforce, which is also a part of the statutory requirement. In addition, DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses the requirement to assess critical skill and competency gaps because, while it did include information on the process used for assessing gaps in its Senior Executive Service workforce, it did not include similar gap information for the other Civilian Senior Leader workforces.

Finally, the Civilian Senior Leader plan also does not address the requirement to include an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. Although the plan provided a breakdown of the projected requirements for each of the department's Civilian Senior Leader workforce categories through fiscal year 2018, and also stated that the department may use military personnel, among others, to fill gaps in its Civilian Senior Leader workforce, it did not discuss any requirements for the department's senior military personnel. The plan further stated that there is little to no need for a contractor workforce at the Civilian Senior Leader workforce level.

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## Financial Management Workforce

With regard to the Financial Management workforce, we found that DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addresses one, partially addresses six, and does not address three of the statutory requirements. For example, DOD's plan addresses the requirement to include specific steps that the department has taken or plans to take to develop appropriate career paths for its workforce, among other things. The plan outlined six major milestones for developing the enterprise-wide financial management career paths, beginning, for example, with collecting the component-specific career paths.

Consistent with the other two plans, however, we found that DOD's Financial Management workforce plan partially addresses the requirements to assess the critical skills and competencies of the current and future workforces. Although the plan identified 4 of the community's

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13 occupational series as mission-critical occupations, which DOD considers its critical skills, and identified the projected trends associated with those occupational series due to retirement, the plan did not provide an assessment of the overall Financial Management workforce's 23 competencies. According to officials, this information was not included in the plan because the community did not begin to conduct its competency assessments until April 2014 and the results of the assessments are not expected to be available until July 2014.

Additionally, the plan partially addresses the requirement to include specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the workforce to address gaps in critical skills and competencies, as well as the program objectives and funding for those strategies. We found that, although the plan included a specific strategy for, among other things, developing and training the Financial Management workforce, the plan did not identify the funding needed for this strategy. The plan stated only that the community coordinated funding needs with DOD's components and that these funding needs were included in the fiscal year 2014 President's Budget. Although not included in the plan, officials from the Comptroller's office told us that they realigned approximately \$13 million to \$14 million per year across the fiscal year 2014-2018 Future Years Defense Program to address training shortfalls and to provide funding for additional web-based course development. Officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service told us that they did not include specific cost information for a majority of the goals and strategies because strategy information comes from the functional communities and, in some cases, each service implements the identified goals and strategies, as needed, and builds any resultant costs into their individual budgets. However, the information we obtained separately from the Financial Management functional community, if included in the plan, would have contributed toward DOD's ability to meet this statutory requirement.

The Financial Management workforce plan also does not address the requirement to include an assessment of civilian, military, and contractor capabilities. As noted above, the department took preliminary steps to assess its workforce mix capabilities through a pilot program; however, the financial management mission-critical occupations were not included as part of that pilot program, and details of the program were not included as part of DOD's plan. According to the plan, the community focused primarily on the civilian Financial Management workforce and, therefore, only provided demographic information on civilians in the mission-critical occupations. The plan did not, however, provide similar demographic and

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projected target data for the military portion of the Financial Management workforce, nor did it address the statutory requirement to provide an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities.

According to officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service responsible for the overall Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, the department did not address all requirements because the plan comprises individual submissions from each of the 22 functional communities and the communities are at different stages in the planning process. In addition, officials also told us that the department tried to provide a consistent level of information for each workforce and, in some cases, omitted available information—such as information on specific workforces—that would address some of the statutory requirements. DOD officials also stated that some requirements were not addressed in the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan because additional efforts are ongoing to address those requirements and the requirements will be reported on in future iterations of the plan.

The department provided its own self-assessment as part of the plan in which it rated its progress addressing the statutory requirements, and found that further work was needed to assess its critical competencies and appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor workforce capabilities. Without ensuring that all statutorily required information is included in the strategic workforce plan, DOD risks producing a plan that does not effectively address the department's needs and will not aid the decision-making process for total workforce management. Although DOD has not met all statutory requirements in its strategic workforce plan, we are not making recommendations at this time because we previously recommended that DOD include these requirements in the plan, as discussed in additional detail in appendix III. We will continue to monitor DOD's progress in implementing these recommendations.

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## DOD's Strategic Workforce Plan Is Not Consistent with Some Key Strategic Workforce-Planning Principles

DOD has not fully incorporated key strategic workforce-planning principles into the development of its strategic workforce plan. Specifically, although DOD has begun to take steps that are consistent with these key principles, we found that the department's plan was not fully aligned with the budget process or the department's other strategic workforce-management initiatives—such as those to address recruiting, retention, and readiness issues—and did not involve stakeholders within its Intelligence functional community. Further, DOD has begun to conduct competency-gap assessments, which may help them in implementing the key principles. However, DOD's plan did not include a complete assessment of the competencies that will be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results nor strategies tailored to address gaps in the critical competencies needed to achieve those results.

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## DOD's Strategic Workforce Plan Is Not Fully Aligned with the Budget Process or Other Strategic Workforce-Management Initiatives

DOD's strategic workforce plan is not fully aligned with the budget process or the department's other strategic workforce-management initiatives. While this practice is not part of DOD's statutory reporting requirements, key practices in human-capital management identify strategic alignment—which occurs when an agency's workforce strategies are linked with its mission and goals, and integrated into its strategic plan, performance plan, and budget formulation—as one of six leading principles for effective strategic workforce planning.<sup>22</sup> In addition, according to one model of strategic human-capital management for federal agencies to use when designing their human-capital management plans, the highest level of strategic integration and alignment occurs when an agency considers human-capital initiatives or refinements in light of both changing organizational needs and the demonstrated successes or shortcomings of its human capital efforts.<sup>23</sup> Further, according to that model, the human-capital needs of the organization and new initiatives or refinements to existing human-capital approaches should be reflected in strategic workforce-planning documents.

DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan is missing key funding information that would facilitate DOD's budget decisions because it is not aligned to the budget process. DOD's plan identified 31 strategies

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<sup>22</sup>GAO-04-39; and Office of Personnel Management, *Introduction to the HCAAF Practitioners Guide*.

<sup>23</sup>GAO-02-373SP.

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for addressing workforce gaps, but did not provide specific information on the funding required—an important element in budget planning decisions—to implement most of these strategies. Only 1 of the 31 strategies—developed by the Intelligence functional community and identified in the plan—provided detailed information on the amount of funding required to implement the strategy. However, for some strategies, DOD’s plan stated that funding was, among other things, at the discretion of the DOD components or to be included in component budgets. For other strategies, DOD’s plan stated that additional funding may be necessary. In each case where funding information was not provided, the plan provided no additional detail on the amount of funding needed to implement the strategies.

Furthermore, the importance of DOD aligning its workforce plan with other strategic workforce initiatives is demonstrated in a December 2013 letter that DOD provided to the congressional defense committees.<sup>24</sup> That letter outlined steps the department is taking to minimize any negative effect on the morale of its civilian workforce and long-term consequences on recruiting and retention due to DOD’s implementation of civilian furloughs conducted during the summer of 2013. DOD’s letter stated the morale of the civilian workforce had been declining for a number of reasons, including the furloughs, and stated that the department expected future furloughs and budget uncertainties to further this downward trend. The department also stated it anticipates that these issues will factor heavily into employees’ decisions about when to depart, as well as individuals’ decisions about when to apply for positions within the department, which will have an effect on recruiting, retention, and readiness.

We recognize that DOD’s letter to the congressional defense committees on this matter was sent after its strategic workforce plan was provided to Congress. We note, however, that the steps outlined in DOD’s letter are targeted at minimizing the declining morale of the department’s civilian workforce. The strategic workforce plan includes recruitment, retention, and development strategies aimed specifically at addressing gaps in critical skills within the department’s functional communities. However, without aligning the steps DOD describes in its letter to congressional

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<sup>24</sup>We reported on DOD’s implementation of furloughs for its civilian workforce in 2013 in GAO, *Sequestration: Comprehensive and Updated Cost Savings Would Better Inform DOD Decisionmakers If Future Civilian Furloughs Occur*, [GAO-14-529](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2014).

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defense committees with its strategic workforce plan, DOD may lack assurance that these efforts will support its overall strategic workforce-planning goals including, for example, how it will address gaps.

To address these issues, DOD stated that the department continues to focus on its strategic workforce-planning efforts that include strategies identified and carried out by the functional communities aimed to recruit, retain, motivate, and develop the present and future civilian workforce. However, DOD officials stated during this review that the recruiting, retention, and workforce development strategies outlined in the department's strategic workforce plan are developed by the individual functional communities and are implemented and funded as appropriate primarily at the component level. Therefore, these strategies do not constitute a department-wide approach to addressing morale, recruitment, and retention issues related to past or future furloughs or budget uncertainties. Further, as our analysis of DOD's current strategic workforce plan shows, DOD has not completed its competency or competency-gap assessments to know where it should target its efforts, nor did its plan include the funding required to carry out such strategies.

DOD's strategic workforce plan currently is not fully aligned with the budget process or other workforce initiatives because there is no requirement for DOD's plan to be aligned with these other efforts. Additionally, there is not a common understanding of how the department's strategic workforce plan will be or should be used within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, who have overall responsibility for DOD's strategic workforce plan, told us they do not envision the plan being linked to other strategic workforce efforts, but added that they believe the workforce planning process itself has value for those involved in the development process.

In contrast, officials from the Total Force Requirements and Sourcing Policies Directorate within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness told us that the strategic workforce plan in its current form is more useful as a source of demographic information on the department's civilian workforce than as a strategic document intended to guide workforce decisions. These officials further stated that the plan would be more useful as a strategic document if certain actions were taken, such as aligning the strategic workforce plan with the DOD budget process, among other things. In addition, although the plan states that DOD intends to align it with the DOD budget and total force-management processes, it did not include specific details or time frames for doing so.

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According to officials with the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, they have been unable to make progress on these efforts because of a lack of information and challenges in coordinating with other offices within DOD. These officials further stated that they do not foresee these challenges being resolved before the department issues its next strategic workforce plan. Our analysis of the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan in particular indicates that without fully aligning DOD's strategic workforce plan with the budget process and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting, retention, and readiness issues associated with declining morale, the department will not be in the best position to make informed management and resource decisions about its workforce.

What we found in our analysis of the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan is in line with a body of work we have conducted in recent years examining other DOD strategic workforce efforts, which found that not aligning the plan with other strategic workforce initiatives is a long-standing issue within DOD. These include workforce-sizing decisions and total force-management efforts.

- In July 2012, we testified on our observations of DOD's planning for its civilian workforce requirements and reported on DOD's efforts since the 1990s to reduce its civilian workforce. Specifically, we found that these efforts did not focus on taking a strategic approach to its workforce downsizing and reshaping efforts, which resulted in imbalances to the shape, skills, and retirement eligibility of its workforce.<sup>25</sup> We found that this was especially true of the civilian acquisition workforce, which from September 1989 to September 1999 was reduced by almost 47 percent. This rate of reduction substantially exceeded that of the rest of the DOD workforce. We concluded that 11 consecutive years of downsizing produced serious imbalances in the skills and experience of the highly talented and specialized civilian acquisition workforce, putting DOD on the verge of a retirement-driven talent drain. Moreover, we found that the lack of an adequate number of trained acquisition and contract-oversight personnel has, at times, contributed to unmet expectations and placed DOD at risk of potentially paying more than necessary.

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<sup>25</sup>GAO, *DOD Civilian Workforce: Observations on DOD's Efforts to Plan for Civilian Workforce Requirements*, [GAO-12-962T](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 26, 2012).



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- In January 2013, we reported on DOD's efforts to implement its self-imposed cap on its civilian workforce levels, and found that the department had not completed its competency-gap assessments—identifying gaps in the existing or projected civilian workforce that should be addressed to ensure the department has continued access to needed critical skills and competencies.<sup>26</sup> As a result, we concluded that information on competency gaps was unavailable to help inform decision making about DOD's civilian workforce when implementing the cap. We also concluded that a fully developed workforce plan, with all completed gap assessments, would help DOD make informed decisions about reducing its workforce and develop strategies to mitigate skill shortages that affect achieving the mission. As a result, we recommended that DOD involve functional community managers and use information from its critical skill and competency-gap assessments as they are completed to make informed decisions for future changes to the workforce and that it document its strategies. DOD partially concurred with our recommendation and stated that it aligns its workforce, both in size and structure, to mission requirements and justifies the current size and possible reductions or increases to the workforce based on mission workload rather than competency or skill gaps needed to deliver capabilities. However, we concluded in that report that DOD is not in a position to justify the size of its workforce until it has fully addressed its statutory requirement to identify areas of critical-skill and competency gaps within the civilian workforce. At the time of our current review, DOD maintained its civilian workforce cap, and, in addition, section 955 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013<sup>27</sup> required the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the civilian and service contractor workforces are appropriately sized to support and execute the National Military Strategy, taking into account military personnel and force-structure levels, and to develop an efficiencies plan for those workforces. Section 955 further requires that the efficiencies plan achieve savings in total funding of the civilian and service contractor workforces that are not less than certain savings achieved from reductions in military end strength over a 6-year period, subject to certain exceptions.

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<sup>26</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Critical Skills and Competency Assessments Should Help Guide DOD Civilian Workforce Decisions*, [GAO-13-188](#) (Washington D.C.: Jan. 17, 2013).

<sup>27</sup>Pub. L. No. 112-239 (2013).

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- In May 2013, we reported on DOD's total force-management efforts and found that DOD had taken some steps to improve its understanding and management of its total workforce, but it had not assessed the appropriate mix of its military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities in its strategic workforce plan as required by law.<sup>28</sup> We concluded that the department was hampered in its ability to make more-informed strategic workforce mix decisions, which are crucial to meeting DOD's statutory responsibility to manage its total workforce. We recommended that DOD revise its existing workforce policies and procedures according to current statutory requirements in Section 129a of Title 10 of the United States Code as well as regulatory requirements set forth in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's September 2011 policy letter to address the (1) determination of the appropriate workforce mix, and (2) identification of critical functions. DOD partially concurred and stated that the department's strategic workforce plan is an integral tool in informing policies and procedures for retention, recruitment, and accession planning and helps inform the demographic makeup of its civilian personnel inventory. DOD also stated that the department justifies its workforce size based on mission workload, rather than competency or skills gaps. However, we concluded in that report that DOD is required by law to establish policies and procedures that require the use of the strategic workforce plan when making determinations of the appropriate mix of total workforce personnel necessary to perform its mission, and to include in the strategic workforce plan an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. As of May 2014, DOD has not taken action to implement these recommendations.

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### DOD's Approach to Developing Its Plan Did Not Fully Involve Stakeholders within Its Intelligence Functional Community

DOD's approach to developing its Fiscal Years 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not fully involve stakeholders within the Intelligence functional community to help ensure statutorily required information is included. While this kind of stakeholder involvement is not statutorily required, a key principle of effective strategic workforce planning is to involve top management, employees, and other stakeholders in developing, communicating, and implementing strategic workforce plans.<sup>29</sup> In addition, federal internal-control standards state that decision

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<sup>28</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Additional Steps Needed to Help Determine the Right Size and Composition of DOD's Total Workforce*, [GAO-13-470](#) (Washington D.C.: May 29, 2013).

<sup>29</sup>[GAO-04-39](#).

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makers need complete and relevant information to manage risk associated with achieving objectives, such as those outlined in strategic plans.<sup>30</sup>

DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not fully involve some stakeholders within the Intelligence functional community throughout the development of the plan, which resulted in the omission of key stakeholder input. Specifically, during the strategic workforce planning process, the Intelligence functional community compiled workforce information on its one mission-critical occupation—the 0132 Intelligence series—and the two senior-leader workforces over which the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence has oversight—the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and the Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces. DOD relies on these two senior-leader workforces to oversee key activities within the defense intelligence community. The Defense Intelligence functional community includes personnel in intelligence occupations from the military departments as well as the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Office, and the department's Defense Intelligence civilian senior-leader workforces—Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Level.

DOD is required to include information on the two Intelligence Civilian Senior Leader workforces in its strategic workforce plan. According to Intelligence functional community managers, they provided information on these two workforces to the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service. However, our review found disparities between the level of detail of the information provided and the information that was incorporated in the strategic workforce plan about these two workforces. For example, the strategic workforce plan included one paragraph of descriptive information on both categories of defense intelligence senior-leader workforces in the Senior Executive Service workforce plan. In contrast, the Intelligence functional community provided detailed information on the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces to the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service for inclusion in the strategic workforce plan. This information

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<sup>30</sup>GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

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included details that would have supported an assessment of the critical skills and competencies, among other things, of the defense intelligence civilian senior-leader workforces, which is required by law to be included in DOD's strategic workforce plan. However, the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service did not fully incorporate this information on the workforces' critical skills and competencies into the final version of DOD's strategic workforce plan.

During the course of our review, we discussed these disparities with officials from both the Intelligence functional community and the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service to try to determine the cause of the missing information. According to officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, the office revised and omitted select information provided by the Intelligence functional community on defense intelligence civilian senior-leader workforces, but they believed the level of detail provided was sufficient to address the statutory requirements. However, our assessment of the information raises questions as to whether the officials responsible for the Civilian Senior Leader strategic workforce plan checked these omissions against the statutory reporting requirements, and if not, as a result excluded key information from the strategic workforce plan on defense intelligence civilian senior-leader workforces that was statutorily required.

In our discussions, officials within the Intelligence functional community responsible for the initial development of this required information and officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service were unclear as to why, in the final coordination of the plan, all stakeholders from the Intelligence functional community were not involved in helping to ensure the inclusion of key statutorily-required information. In subsequent discussions, officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service stated that they would be vigilant of such omissions during the development of future plans to help ensure all available, statutorily required information is included and that all appropriate stakeholders are involved in the development and review processes.

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## DOD's Plan Did Not Include Complete Competency-Gap Assessments or Strategies for Addressing Critical Competency Gaps

DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not include completed competency-gap assessments or strategies for addressing critical competency gaps. A leading principle of effective strategic workforce planning is that agencies should determine the critical skills and competencies that will be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results and develop strategies tailored to address gaps and human-capital conditions in critical skills and competencies that need attention.<sup>31</sup> Although we found that DOD has taken steps to determine the critical skills needed by the department through the identification of its mission-critical occupations, our evaluation of DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan found that the department has not completed its competency and competency-gap assessment or included strategies to address competency gaps based on such assessments.<sup>32</sup>

In 2004, we recommended, and DOD partially concurred, that the department develop workforce strategies to fill the identified skills and competency gaps.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, in 2012, we recommended DOD conduct competency-gap assessments for its mission-critical occupations and report the results.<sup>34</sup> DOD concurred with our recommendation and stated in its agency comments that competency gaps would be assessed in the future. To date, however, the department's strategic workforce plan has only included strategies that address staffing gaps—which are aimed at addressing gaps in the critical skills, but not the critical competencies, needed in a workforce—within its mission-critical occupations.

Furthermore, our analysis of three functional communities' strategic workforce plans found that the Intelligence and Financial Management functional communities have not completed their competency-gap

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<sup>31</sup>[GAO-04-39](#). These leading principles of effective strategic workforce planning are consistent with Section 115b statutory requirements for DOD's strategic workforce plan, which require DOD to, among other things, provide assessments of the critical skills and competencies of the existing and future civilian employee workforces, as well as any gaps identified and strategies to mitigate those gaps.

<sup>32</sup>DOD also defines a competency as an observable, measurable pattern of knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics that individuals need in order to successfully perform their work. See DOD Instruction 1400.25, Volume 250, *DOD Civilian Personnel Management System: Volume 250, Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning (SHCP)* (Nov. 18, 2008).

<sup>33</sup>[GAO-04-753](#).

<sup>34</sup>[GAO-12-1014](#).

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assessments or developed strategies for addressing competency gaps in their workforces. In regard to the Civilian Senior Leader functional community, DOD's strategic workforce plan provided information on competencies for one of the five categories of Civilian Senior Leader workforces—the Senior Executive Service. Our analysis of these three functional communities' strategic workforce plans suggests that additional attention is needed in DOD's approach to strategic workforce planning to fully address our prior recommendations with regard to critical skill and competency assessments.

#### Intelligence Functional Community

The Intelligence functional community has identified broad competencies for its one mission-critical occupation—the 0132 Intelligence series—but further progress in competency development and assessment for its workforce will not be complete until the community develops a common standard for titling occupational specialties (e.g., Human Intelligence and Signals Intelligence) within its 0132 Intelligence series workforce. According to Intelligence functional community officials and the Intelligence community's own workforce plan, eight broad competencies have been identified for its mission-critical occupation.<sup>35</sup> However, competency assessments and gap assessments cannot be completed until the community completes development of standard civilian intelligence job titles for occupational specialties within the Intelligence series mission-critical occupation. Officials from the Intelligence functional community told us they are coordinating with relevant stakeholders within the defense intelligence community and the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service on an occupational titling standard to address this issue. Those officials also stated that efforts are underway and it may take up to 2 years to complete the development of the occupational titling standard. Once the standard is developed, competency models for each occupational specialty within the intelligence series will be further developed for the workforce, according to officials.

#### Financial Management Functional Community

The Financial Management functional community is currently in the process of developing a strategy that, in part, addresses its workforce's skills and competencies and is scheduled to assess the competencies of its mission-critical occupations. The strategy being developed—the Financial Management Certification Program—is a program that is

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<sup>35</sup>These eight competencies are cyber intelligence, all-source analysis, geospatial intelligence, signals intelligence, counterintelligence, human intelligence, analysis and production, and collection management.

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expected to consolidate multiple Financial Management workforce development efforts across the department into a mandatory program to educate, train, and certify both civilian and military financial management personnel. In addition, competency assessments for the Financial Management functional community's mission-critical occupations were scheduled to begin using an enterprise-wide competency assessment tool from April 7 to April 25, 2014, and extended the assessment period through May 9, 2014. The results of this assessment were not yet available to the functional community, and officials stated that they would receive the results from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service by July 2014. At the time of our review, officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) were waiting for the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service to analyze the competency-assessment data. According to DOD, this effort, which included key financial-management and leadership competencies, will enable the community to assess and close the gaps between current capabilities and the competencies required by DOD's future Financial Management workforce.

Civilian Senior Leader  
Functional Community

The strategic workforce plan for DOD's Civilian Senior Leader functional community—a cross-cutting workforce that includes personnel from the Senior Executive Service and Senior Level workforces, among others—identifies the competencies of its Senior Executive Service workforce but does not include information on the competencies and competency assessments of its other Civilian Senior Leader workforces.<sup>36</sup> The department's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan provides information on Office of Personnel Management—and DOD-specific competencies for DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce. However, the plan does not include information on the competencies and competency assessments for its Senior Level and Senior Technical workforce. According to the plan and officials responsible for the development of the Civilian Senior Leader strategic workforce plan, these senior-leader workforces are specialized in nature and they are evaluated primarily on the technical or functional competencies found within their specific occupational series. The plan also does not provide information on the competency and competency assessments for the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces. Furthermore, the plan does

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<sup>36</sup>In November 2010, we reported on DOD's requirements determinations of its civilian leader workforce. See GAO, *Human Capital: Opportunities Exist for DOD to Enhance Its Approach for Determining Civilian Senior Leader Needs*, [GAO-11-136](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 4, 2010).

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not identify any specific strategies for addressing competency gaps for the Civilian Senior Leader workforces, though it does identify some minimal competency gaps for its senior executive service workforce.

Because we previously recommended that DOD conduct competency-gap analyses as part of our 2004 and 2012 reports, we are not making new recommendations to address this issue in this report. We continue to believe that our prior recommendations have merit and would improve DOD's strategic workforce plan. We will continue to monitor DOD's efforts to address our prior recommendations.

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## Conclusions

In this time of budgetary and fiscal constraint, a strategic workforce plan that includes relevant and complete workforce analyses and associated plan of action is crucial for DOD to effectively and efficiently manage all of its civilian workforces. Since our first report in 2008 on DOD's strategic workforce plan, we have consistently reported that DOD has made progress in addressing strategic workforce planning requirements. In that time, however, we have also identified consistent issues in DOD's efforts to develop its plan, such as the department not assessing and reporting on mission-critical competencies and gaps. We recognize the effort that DOD is putting forth to include this information in its recurring strategic workforce plans and address all mandated strategic workforce planning requirements. However, without ensuring that all statutorily required information is included in the strategic workforce plan, DOD risks producing a plan that does not effectively address the department's needs and will not aid the decision-making process for total workforce management. As a result, we continue to believe that DOD should fully implement our past recommendations on including all required information.

While this is the last of DOD's strategic workforce plans we are mandated to evaluate, we believe that, moving forward, it is important for DOD to continue its efforts to complete development of its strategic workforce plans to help ensure that the department has the right people, in the right place, at the right time. This type of workforce planning can also help DOD focus limited resources on those human-capital programs that most affect their ability to accomplish the department's wide array of missions. However, until DOD aligns its strategic workforce plan with the budget process and other strategic management initiatives, such as those to address recruitment, retention, and readiness issues, both DOD and congressional decision makers may not have visibility over the areas most in need of attention. Through greater alignment, DOD can help to



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better ensure that its strategic workforce plan appropriately addresses the human-capital challenges of the future and better contributes to the agency's efforts to meet its missions and goals.

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## Recommendation for Executive Action

To help ensure that decision makers and Congress have the necessary information to provide effective oversight of DOD's civilian workforce and that the strategic workforce plan can be used effectively, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness align DOD's strategic workforce plan with the budget and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting, retention, and readiness issues associated with declining morale among its civilian workforces.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for comment. In written comments, DOD concurred with our recommendation. DOD's comments are reprinted in their entirety in appendix V.

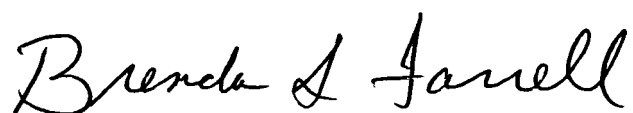
DOD concurred with our recommendation to align the department's strategic workforce plan with the budget and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting, retention, and readiness issues associated with declining morale among its civilian workforces. We are encouraged that DOD recognizes the importance of linking its strategic workforce plan with the budget and other management workforce initiatives.

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We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In addition, this report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

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If you or your staff have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3604 or [farrellb@gao.gov](mailto:farrellb@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix VI.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda S. Farrell". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Brenda S. Farrell  
Director  
Defense Capabilities and Management

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*List of Committees*

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon  
Chairman  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
House of Representatives

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# Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

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To determine the extent to which the Department of Defense's (DOD) Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan addressed the statutory requirements of Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code, we evaluated DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan and supporting documentation to determine the degree to which the plan addresses, partially addresses, or does not address each of the required elements. Using a scorecard methodology, we assigned a rating of "addresses" if all elements of a legislative requirement were cited, even if specificity and details could be improved upon. We assigned a rating of "partially addresses" if an assessment or plan of action did not include all of the elements of a legislative requirement. A rating of "does not address" was assigned when elements of a characteristic were not explicitly cited or discussed or any implicit references were either too vague or too general to be useful. To make this determination, two GAO analysts independently evaluated and scored each element in DOD's plan, and then met to resolve any differences in their respective independent analyses. When different initial ratings were given by the two analysts, they met to discuss and resolve the differences in their respective scorecards. In addition, our Office of General Counsel reviewed the team's completed analysis.

We then discussed the results of our analysis with officials from the Strategic Human Capital Planning Office and the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, who are responsible for developing the plan. We also discussed the results of our assessment with officials from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and the Office of the Undersecretary (Comptroller) who serve as the functional community managers for the Intelligence functional community and the Financial Management functional community, respectively. Officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service have responsibility for the Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan.

To determine the extent to which DOD's strategic workforce plan is consistent with key strategic workforce planning principles, we compared DOD's 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan to key principles of effective

strategic workforce planning.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we selected two key principles—aligning workforce planning with strategic planning and budget formulation and involving stakeholders, among others, in developing, communicating, and implementing the strategic workforce plan—that do not overlap with the statutory requirements. Additionally, we selected two other key principles—determining the critical skills and competencies needed to achieve current and future programmatic results and developing strategies that are tailored to address gaps—because they are integral to developing a comprehensive strategic workforce plan and we have consistently found that DOD has not yet completed actions to address issues related to them.

We also analyzed DOD's plan and interviewed officials from the Strategic Human Capital Planning Office to obtain information on DOD's approach to strategic workforce planning. We also reviewed our prior work on DOD's other strategic workforce initiatives and determined the extent to which the department tied those efforts to its strategic workforce plan. In addition, we interviewed officials responsible for the processes used by 3 of DOD's 22 functional communities to obtain additional perspective on their approaches. The three communities included (1) the Civilian Senior Leader functional community; (2) the Financial Management functional community; and (3) the Intelligence functional community. We selected these three functional communities because DOD is required specifically to include information about its Civilian Senior Leader and its Financial Management workforces in its Strategic Workforce Plan. We also selected the Intelligence functional community because our 2012 review of DOD's 2010 Strategic Workforce Plan<sup>2</sup> found that the department's Intelligence community did not provide the mandated workforce assessments or plan of action for shaping and improving that workforce. We selected the three communities to better understand how each of their plans was developed based on the stated criteria. However, our

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<sup>1</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning*, [GAO-04-39](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 11, 2003); *A Model of Strategic Human Capital Management*, [GAO-02-373SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 15, 2002). See also Office of Personnel Management, *Introduction to the HCAAF Practitioners Guide* (September 2005). These principles were developed based on GAO's prior reports and testimonies examining best practices in strategic human-capital management, review of studies by leading workforce-planning organizations, and interviews with officials from the Office of Personnel Management and other federal agencies.

<sup>2</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: DOD Needs Complete Assessments to Improve Future Civilian Strategic Workforce Plans*, [GAO-12-1014](#) (Washington D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

selection of these three functional communities does not constitute a representative sample of DOD's 22 functional communities. Thus, while the results cannot be projected to all functional communities, they did provide us with important insights. For each of the three functional communities selected, we reviewed GAO and Office of Personnel Management guidance regarding strategic workforce planning, and compared DOD's current approach to developing and integrating functional community-specific information into its Strategic Workforce Plan against that guidance.<sup>3</sup>

We also evaluated steps taken by DOD for identifying and obtaining strategic workforce-planning data; processes for conducting the strategic workforce-planning efforts for specific functional communities as part of the larger DOD strategic workforce plan; and instructions or guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness conducting such steps and processes. For all three functional communities, we met with the respective functional community managers<sup>4</sup> to determine how key terms and concepts were applied during the development of their respective community's appendix. We also discussed DOD's strategic planning approach with officials from the Strategic Human Capital Planning Office and the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service, within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, as well as officials from the Total Force Requirements and Sourcing Policies Directorate also within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We then evaluated the data presented in the plan to assess the extent to which DOD's latest plan is consistent with key strategic workforce-planning principles; however, we did not assess the underlying accuracy of DOD's data.

We conducted this performance audit from September 2013 to July 2014 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our

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<sup>3</sup>[GAO-04-39](#), [GAO-02-373SP](#), and Office of Personnel Management, *Introduction to the HCAAF Practitioners Guide*.

<sup>4</sup>Functional community managers are responsible for monitoring the strategic human-capital planning efforts for their respective communities, including workforce forecasting, competency assessment, and strategy development.

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findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

# Appendix II: DOD’s Functional Communities and Mission-Critical Occupations

The Department of Defense (DOD) uses a functional-community construct and functional-community categories to group together employees who perform similar functions. Mission-critical occupations are those occupations that are critical to the success of meeting the DOD mission within its functional communities. For the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, the department expanded its functional community construct from 12 functional communities to 22 functional communities and from 24 mission-critical occupations to 32 mission-critical occupations. Table 2 identifies the department’s functional communities and mission-critical occupations.

Table 2: List of DOD’s Functional Communities and Associated Mission-Critical Occupations	
22 functional communities	32 mission-critical occupations (series)
Acquisition <sup>a</sup>	Contracting Series (1102) Quality Assurance Series (1910)
Facility Engineering and Management	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Engineering (Non-Construction)	Nuclear Engineering Series (0840) Computer Engineering Series (0855)
Environmental Management	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Logistics	Logistics Management Series (0346) Inventory Management Series (2010) Traffic Management Series (2130) Supply Program Management Series (2003) Equipment Services Series (1670) Transportation Operations Series (2150) General Supply Series (2001) Transportation Specialist Series (2101)
Safety and Public Safety	Explosive Safety Series (0017) Safety and Public Safety Series (0018) Fire Protection and Prevention Series (0081)
Science and Technology	Computer Science Series (1550)
Administrative Support	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Education	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Human Resources	Human Resources Management Series (0201)
Law Enforcement	Criminal Investigating Series (1811)
Manpower	N/A <sup>b</sup>



**Appendix II: DOD's Functional Communities  
and Mission-Critical Occupations**

<b>22 functional communities</b>	<b>32 mission-critical occupations (series)</b>
Medical	Psychology Series (0180) Social Work Series (0185) Medical Officer Series (0602) Nurse Series (0610) Pharmacist Series (0660)
Social Science	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Financial Management	Financial Administration Series (0501) Accounting Series (0510) Auditing Series (0511) Budget Analysis Series (0560)
Foreign Affairs	Foreign Affairs Series (0130)
Information Technology	Information Technology Management Series (2210)
Intelligence	Intelligence Series (0132)
Security	Security Administration Series (0080)
Legal	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Public Affairs	N/A <sup>b</sup>
Senior Executive Service	Crosscutting

Source: DOD. | GAO-14-565

Notes: Data are from DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.

<sup>a</sup>DOD did not include the Acquisition functional community's assessment in its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.

<sup>b</sup>Denotes an emerging functional community. For the emerging functional communities added in the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, the department did not identify any mission-critical occupations.

# Appendix III: Status of Prior GAO Recommendations Related to Strategic Workforce Planning

In prior reports on the Department of Defense’s (DOD) strategic workforce-planning efforts, we made several recommendations for executive action to improve DOD’s strategic workforce plan and the department’s approach to strategic workforce planning. We consider a recommendation open if DOD has not taken or has not completed actions to address a recommendation. We consider a recommendation closed—implemented once DOD has taken action to satisfy the intent of the recommendation. We consider a recommendation closed—not implemented if the intent of the recommendation has not been satisfied or circumstances have rendered the recommendation invalid. We are continuing to monitor DOD’s efforts to address these recommendations. Table 3 summarizes our recommendations, DOD’s response to our recommendations, and what actions, if any, DOD has taken to address them.

**Table 3: Prior GAO Recommendations, Status, and DOD Response and Actions Taken**

GAO report and relevant recommendations	Status of recommendation (per GAO)	DOD response and actions taken
<p>Human Capital: Additional Steps Needed to Help Determine the Right Size and Composition of DOD’s Total Workforce, <a href="#">GAO-13-470</a> (May 29, 2013)</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommended that DOD revise its existing workforce policies and procedures according to current statutory requirements in Section 129a of Title 10 of the United States Code, as well as, regulatory requirements set forth in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy’s September 2011 policy letter to address the (1) determination of the appropriate workforce mix, and (2) identification of critical functions.</p>	Open	<p>DOD partially concurred with this recommendation and stated in its agency comments that DOD Directive 1100.4 was undergoing revision and entering the formal issuance process. Further, DOD stated that the updated directive would authorize and direct the revision of the instruction. DOD determined that it did not need to take any additional action to address this recommendation.</p> <p>Additionally, according to the DOD Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, DOD initiated a pilot study in fiscal year 2012 to identify a process to assess the capability delivered by the federal government career civilian workforce, military personnel, and contractor support. The pilot study involved three high-risk mission-critical occupations—Nursing, Fire Protection and Prevention, and Contracting. During our review, DOD officials also told us that the pilot is currently being reevaluated and will be discussed in the upcoming fiscal year 2014-2019 DOD strategic workforce plan.</p>

**Appendix III: Status of Prior GAO  
Recommendations Related to Strategic  
Workforce Planning**

GAO report and relevant recommendations	Status of recommendation (per GAO)	DOD response and actions taken
<p>Human Capital: Critical Skills and Competency Assessments Should Help Guide DOD Civilian Workforce Decisions, <a href="#">GAO-13-188</a> (Jan. 17, 2013)</p> <p>Recommendations: We recommended that DOD</p> <p>(1) involve functional community managers and to the extent possible, use information from gap assessments of its critical skills and competencies as they are completed to make informed decisions for possible future reductions or justify the size of the force that it has; and</p> <p>(2) document its efforts to strategically manage its civilian workforce and maintain critical skills and competencies for future reductions.</p>	Open	<p>DOD partially concurred with both recommendations and stated in its agency comments that competency-gap assessments were evolving, and that it expected to have a workforce plan that responded to the statutory requirements, to include competency-gap analyses, by 2015.</p> <p>However, according to the DOD Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, the development and assessment of competencies and identification of competency gaps for the majority of the workforce will require several workforce planning cycles to fully implement and fully meet the intent of section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code requirements. At the time the plan was released, DOD had completed competency models for 21 of the 32 mission-critical occupations identified in the plan. Subsequently, DOD officials told us in April 2014 that they have completed competency models for all currently identified mission-critical occupations.</p>
<p>Defense Workforce: DOD Needs to Better Oversee In-sourcing Data and Align In-sourcing Efforts with Strategic Workforce Plan, <a href="#">GAO-12-319</a> (Feb. 9, 2012)</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommended that DOD better align the data collected on in-sourcing with the department's strategic workforce plans and establish metrics with which to measure progress in meeting any in-sourcing goals.</p>	Open	<p>DOD partially concurred with this recommendation and stated in its agency comments that it has worked to align in-sourcing and strategic workforce planning efforts and that in-sourcing is one of the many tools available to help close competency gaps and meet strategic workforce planning goals. DOD further stated that in-sourcing should not be limited to areas identified in strategic workforce plans.</p> <p>DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not contain any references to DOD's in-sourcing efforts and, in follow-up discussions on our recommendations, an official from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness stated that DOD had not taken any action in response to this recommendation. The official stated that DOD and GAO have a difference of opinion on the purpose of DOD's strategic workforce plans—that having the right skill sets (the purpose of strategic planning) is different from the mix of military, civilian, and contractors in the workforce (which relates to in-sourcing). The official also stated that having the right skill sets and having the right mix do not relate to each other, and therefore the department had not followed GAO's recommendation to align its reporting on the two efforts. However, as noted in our work, by statute DOD is required to assess the appropriate mix of skills (military, civilian, and contractor) and include such an assessment in its strategic workforce plan.</p>

**Appendix III: Status of Prior GAO  
Recommendations Related to Strategic  
Workforce Planning**

GAO report and relevant recommendations	Status of recommendation (per GAO)	DOD response and actions taken
<p>Human Capital: DOD Needs Complete Assessments to Improve Future Civilian Strategic Workforce Plans, <a href="#">GAO-12-1014</a> (Sept. 27, 2012)</p> <p>Recommendations: We recommended that DOD</p> <p>(1) include in the guidance that it disseminates for developing future strategic workforce plans clearly defined terms and processes for conducting assessments of critical skills and competencies, and gaps for the existing and future civilian workforces;</p> <p>(2) conduct competency-gap analyses for DOD's mission-critical occupations and report the results and, when managers cannot conduct such analyses, we recommended that DOD report a timeline in the strategic workforce plan for providing these assessments;</p> <p>(3) establish and adhere to timelines that will ensure issuance of future strategic workforce plans in accordance with statutory time frames;</p> <p>(4) provide guidance for developing future strategic workforce plans that clearly directs the functional communities to collect information that identifies not only the number or percentage of personnel in its military, civilian, and contractor workforces but also the capabilities of the appropriate mix of those three workforces; and</p> <p>(5) enhance the department's results-oriented performance measures by revising existing measures or developing additional measures that will more clearly align with DOD's efforts to monitor progress in meeting the strategic workforce-planning requirements in section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code.</p>	Open	<p>DOD concurred with our first recommendation and partially concurred with the remaining four recommendations. DOD responded in its agency comments that our recommendations simply restated areas for improvement that the department had already identified in its plan, and which had already been implemented since the plan was published. However, we responded that these issues were not new and that, since we began our work reviewing DOD's strategic workforce planning efforts for its civilian workforce, we had reported mixed results and continued to believe that corrective action is needed.</p> <p>Subsequently, in May 2013, officials from the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service who are responsible for developing DOD's strategic workforce plan stated that recommendations made in this report would be addressed in DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan, which was submitted to Congress in September 2013. However, our current assessment of DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan shows that work remains to be done, particularly in regard to competency-gap analyses.</p>
<p>Human Capital: Complete Information and More Analyses Needed to Enhance DOD's Civilian Senior Leader Strategic Workforce Plan, <a href="#">GAO-12-990R</a> (Sept. 19, 2012)</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommended that DOD conduct assessments of the skills, competencies, and gaps within all five career Civilian Senior Leader workforces and report them in DOD's future strategic workforce plans.</p>	Open	<p>DOD concurred with our recommendation and in its agency comments acknowledged that the department fell short of conducting assessments of skills, competencies, and gaps within three of the five Civilian Senior Leader workforces—Senior Level, Senior Technical, and Defense Intelligence Senior Level—as a result of their technical roles in DOD leadership hierarchy. DOD also stated that, as these roles are refined, this work will be reflected in future strategic workforce plans, as appropriate.</p> <p>DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not include information on the assessment of the critical skills, competencies, and gaps in all five Civilian Senior Leader workforces (see app. IV).</p>

**Appendix III: Status of Prior GAO  
Recommendations Related to Strategic  
Workforce Planning**



GAO report and relevant recommendations	Status of recommendation (per GAO)	DOD response and actions taken
<p>Human Capital: Opportunities Exist to Build on Recent Progress to Strengthen DOD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan, <a href="#">GAO-09-235</a> (Feb. 10, 2009)</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommended that DOD</p> <p>(1) develop a performance plan that includes establishing implementation goals and time frames, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources;</p> <p>(2) develop a performance plan that establishes implementation goals and timeframes, measuring performance, and aligning activities with resources; and</p> <p>(3) incorporate, in future updates to its strategic human capital plan, strategies for addressing factors that could significantly affect DOD civilian workforce plans—including contractor roles and the effect contractors have on requirements for DOD's civilian workforce.</p>	<p>Closed—implemented for recommendations (1) and (2);</p> <p>Closed—not implemented for recommendation (3)</p>	<p>DOD partially concurred with our recommendations. DOD responded in its agency comments that the program office responsible for developing the department's strategic workforce plan was only recently established at the time and that these efforts were in progress. The department also stated that it had strategies in place to address recruitment and retention needs arising from factors affecting the DOD workforce and it would more closely align these causal factors so linkages would be clearly evident.</p> <p>Subsequent follow up on these recommendations found that, with regard to the first two recommendations, DOD—in its fiscal year 2010-2018 update to the strategic workforce plan— included goals and time frames for its strategic workforce-planning capabilities, such as identifying lessons learned to improve data collection, forecasting and workforce analysis, and implementation of the plan in order to fully meet statutory strategic planning requirements. With regard to the third recommendation, we reported that DOD's Fiscal Year 2010-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan did not address specific factors that could significantly affect DOD's civilian workforce plan.</p> <p>Our review of DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan found that DOD has established performance measures intended to assess the department's progress in implementing a strategic workforce plan that meets the statutory requirements.</p>
<p>The Department of Defense's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan Does Not Meet Most Statutory Requirements, <a href="#">GAO-08-439R</a> (Feb. 6, 2008)</p> <p>Recommendation: We recommended that DOD submit to Congress a civilian human-capital strategic plan that addresses all statutory requirements in section 1122(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 and this be included in DOD's next submission, which was due in March 2008.</p>	<p>Closed—not implemented</p>	<p>DOD disagreed with our recommendation and, in its comments, stated that the department planned to include more documents in its required March 2008 report. DOD also described several ongoing efforts to conduct workforce planning and analysis and that the department planned to take actions to improve its management of civilian human-capital planning. However, we responded that these other ongoing efforts were not submitted as part of DOD's human-capital strategic plan and, therefore, did not meet the statutory requirements.</p> <p>The findings of our review of DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan indicate that DOD has not yet submitted a strategic workforce plan that addresses all statutory requirements.</p>

Source: GAO analysis of GAO and DOD data. | GAO-14-565

# Appendix IV: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent to Which DOD’s Civilian Workforce Plan Addresses Statutory Requirements

This appendix provides our assessment of the extent to which the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan for its overall civilian workforce, civilian senior-leader workforce, and financial-management workforce address statutory requirements in Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code in the following three tables.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 4: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent to Which DOD’s Overall Civilian Workforce Plan Addresses the Statutory Requirements in Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code**

Overall civilian workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>1. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies of the existing civilian employee workforce of the department and projected trends in that workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD’s overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD’s plan discussed 30 mission-critical occupations, which according to DOD officials constitute the department’s critical skills for its workforce.<sup>a</sup> The plan provided data on projected trends due to retirement for the mission-critical occupations. DOD developed a forecasting tool, using RAND’s initial forecast tool as a prototype, to forecast future workforce efforts based on Office of the Secretary of Defense Functional Community Manager–submitted workforce targets The plan does give a caveat for its data and trends by saying that the forecasts in the plan should be viewed as describing a point in time and are subject to change due to the significant budget cuts the department is experiencing.</p> <p>The department’s plan did not, however, include competency assessments for all mission-critical occupations. More specifically, the plan included a table that identified 20 mission-critical occupations for which competency models had been developed, and an additional 10 that were ready for development. The plan did not provide further information on when development of these 10 competency models would be completed or when the assessments would be conducted.</p>	
<p><b>2. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies that will be needed in the future within the civilian employee workforce by the Department of Defense to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department during the five-year period corresponding to the current Future Years Defense Program [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(A)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD’s overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD’s plan discussed 30 mission-critical occupations in total, which according to DOD officials constitute the department’s critical skills for its future workforce.<sup>b</sup> The department provided data, including projected targets, for the mission-critical occupation workforces for the 5-year period corresponding to the Future Years Defense Program.</p> <p>The department’s plan did not, however, include competency assessments needed in the future for all mission-critical occupations. More specifically, the plan included a table that identified 20 mission-critical occupations for which competency models had been developed, and an additional 10 that were ready for development.</p>	

<sup>1</sup>To meet our mandated requirement to report on DOD’s 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan we provided our assessment of DOD’s compliance with the statutory requirements to congressional defense committees on March 26, 2014.

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Overall civilian workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>3. An assessment of gaps in the existing or projected civilian employee workforce of the department that should be addressed to ensure that the department has continued access to the critical skills and competencies it needs [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(D)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD's workforce plan included some evidence of gap analyses for DOD's 30 mission-critical occupations. However, in many cases while DOD included information on gaps in its critical skills (or staffing gaps within its mission-critical occupations), it did not include information on gaps in the competencies that are needed within each of the mission-critical occupations. According to officials, in October 2013, the department began using a Defense Competency Assessment Tool to support competency-gap analysis reporting at the DOD enterprise, functional community, and component levels. As the competency models are developed and are loaded into the tool, the department will be able to proceed with further competency-gap analyses. The content will be loaded and retained in the Defense Competency Assessment Tool for validation, gap assessment, and enterprise management. Officials further stated their intention to address the requirement for competency assessments over the next 2 years and to include this information in DOD's fiscal year 2016 plan.</p>	●
<p><b>4. An assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities, as determined under the total force management policies and procedures established under 10 U.S.C. § 129a [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(B)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan does not address this requirement because DOD did not include an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. DOD's plan did, however, state that the department is continuing to develop a systematic and iterative approach to meeting the requirements of section 115b by incorporating a Total Force Mix capabilities assessment approach in alignment with DOD's Rolling Wave Maturity Model. This approach uses existing statutorily required data sets and tools, such as the inventory of contracted services and the data compiled in response to the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act.</p> <p>Further, as part of its iterative approach, in fiscal year 2012 the department initiated a pilot study of the process to assess capabilities being delivered by the federal government career civilian workforce, military personnel, and contract support. The initial pilot study was limited to the three mission-critical occupation series that DOD has identified as high risk (Nurse, Fire Protection and Prevention, and Contracting). At the time of our review, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service officials told us that the pilot was being reevaluated during the fiscal year 2014-2019 Strategic Workforce Plan cycle and will be refreshed for future reporting. Officials also told us that the department's goal is to assess a broad range of mission-critical occupation capabilities by fiscal year 2016 but they did not provide interim milestones.</p>	○
<p><b>5. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific recruiting and retention goals, especially in areas identified as critical skills and competencies, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such goals and the funding needed to achieve such goals [10 U.S.C. §115b(b)(2)(A)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan included recruiting and retention goals, program objectives, and funding information, as appropriate, for 13 of the 30 mission-critical occupations. However, with regard to some recruiting and retention goals, the plan only stated that funding was at the discretion of the components or funding may be necessary, but did not provide a specific estimate.</p>	●

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Overall civilian workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>6. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian employee workforce of the department, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such strategies and the funding needed to implement such strategies [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(B)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. According to the plan, DOD identified a total of 31 strategies to address the department's recruitment and retention gaps and issues. DOD further categorized these strategies into eight groupings including training/certification programs, recruitment/hiring flexibilities, and employee career mapping, among others. Although DOD's plan provided details about strategies' program objectives, it provided specific cost/funding information associated with its specific strategy to address gaps in its workforce for only one mission-critical occupation. In contrast, for other strategies the plan only stated, for example, that funding was at the discretion of the components or funding may be necessary if training was required, but did not provide a specific estimate.</p>	●
<p><b>7. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies including any incentives necessary to attract or retain any civilian personnel possessing the skills and competencies identified [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD's workforce plan identifies incentives needed to attract or retain any civilian personnel possessing the identified skills and competencies. DOD's plan provided enterprise-level information on the department's use of recruitment, retention, and relocation incentives and the Federal Student Loan Repayment Program. For example, DOD identified incentive use, including the number of actions and associated average dollars, for each functional community. The plan also stated that such incentives and programs are especially useful for DOD in recruiting new employees, relocating current employees, or retaining employees with unusually high or unique qualifications or who fulfill a special need. However, without having completed all competency assessments and gap analyses, the plan does not clearly identify how the identified incentives address necessary critical skills and competencies.</p>	●
<p><b>8. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes any legislative changes that may be necessary to achieve its recruiting and retention goals [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(F)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan addresses this requirement. DOD's workforce plan identified legislative changes that may be necessary to help achieve the identified recruiting and retention goals set forth in the plan. For example, the Intelligence functional community described a potential legislative change to address a critical skill gap in its intelligence mission-critical occupation. The described legislative change would request relief from certain restrictions on civilian hiring to allow the Defense Security Service to hire additional personnel to address workload issues for that workforce. In some cases, the plan identified that no changes were necessary or were otherwise not applicable.</p>	●
<p><b>9. An assessment, using results-oriented performance measures, of the progress of the department in implementing the strategic workforce plan under this section during the previous year [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(3)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's overall civilian workforce plan addresses this requirement. The plan included a chapter entitled "Monitor Progress" which outlines six overarching results-oriented performance measures intended to assess the department's progress in implementing a strategic workforce plan that meets the statutory requirements. Using three of these measures, the department tracked progress made from fiscal year 2010 through 2012. These measures included, for example, (1) workforce-planning key milestones, (2) end strength versus targets, and (3) competency-model development and deployment. In addition, DOD also added a performance measure to the plan to track progress toward developing an approach to assessing appropriate workforce mix. According to the plan, of the six performance measures identified, the department fully met three measures, partially met two measures, and was still assessing progress on the remaining measure.</p>	●



Appendix IV: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD’s Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements

Overall civilian workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<b>10. Any additional matters the Secretary of Defense considers necessary to address. [10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(4)]</b> <b>Comments:</b> DOD’s overall civilian workforce plan addresses this requirement. The plan did not include any additional matters that the Secretary of Defense considered necessary to address in the plan. According to DOD officials, the Secretary of Defense did not refer any additional matters to the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service to address in the plan, meaning that the Secretary of Defense did not consider there to be any additional matters that needed to be addressed. Therefore, we assessed this requirement as addressed.	●

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565

Legend:

- = Addressed—workforce plan discussed all aspects of the statutory requirement
- ◐ = Partially Addressed—workforce plan discussed some aspects of the statutory requirement
- = Not Addressed—workforce plan did not discuss any aspects of the statutory requirement

Notes: Data are from DOD’s Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.




<sup>a</sup>DOD did not include the Acquisition functional community’s assessment in its Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, we evaluated the information provided on the 30 mission-critical occupations that were included in DOD’s Fiscal Year 2013-2018 plan.

<sup>b</sup>Additional information on the four Financial Management workforce mission-critical occupations is included in table 3.

Table 5: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent to Which DOD’s Civilian Senior Leader Workforce Plan Addresses the Statutory Requirements in Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code

Civilian Senior Leader workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<b>1. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies of the existing civilian employee workforce of the department and projected trends in that workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(C)]</b> <b>Comments:</b> DOD’s Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan provided information on DOD’s assessment of the competencies of the department’s Senior Executive Service workforce. The plan, however, did not discuss an assessment of the critical skills for the Civilian Senior Leader workforce. Further, the plan did not provide any information on assessments of the department’s Senior Level, Senior Technical, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, and Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces. While the plan did include information about the projected rates of retirement for the Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, and Senior Technical workforces through fiscal year 2018, it did not include similar information for the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces.	◐

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Civilian Senior Leader workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>2. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies that will be needed in the future within the civilian employee workforce by the Department of Defense to support national security requirements and effectively manage the Department during the five-year period corresponding to the current Future Years Defense Program [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(A)]</b></p>	
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan provided information on the 16 Office of Personnel Management government-wide competencies and 2 DOD-specific competencies for the Senior Executive Service. DOD assessed these competencies for its Senior Executive Service workforce in fiscal year 2012. These competencies include strategic thinking, leveraging diversity, and developing others, among others. The department completed proficiency-level definitions and behavioral illustrations for each of these competencies and has consolidated that information into a guide for human-resource officials and civilian senior executives. The plan, however, did not discuss an assessment of the critical skills for the Civilian Senior Leader workforce. Further, while the plan provided this information on competencies for its Senior Executive Service workforce, it did not provide similar information for its Senior Level, Senior Technical, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, and Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces. The plan also did not clearly indicate whether these critical competencies correspond to the current Future Years Defense Program.</p>	
<p><b>3. An assessment of gaps in the existing or projected civilian employee workforce of the department that should be addressed to ensure that the department has continued access to the critical skills and competencies it needs [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(D)]</b></p>	
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD discussed the process used for assessing gaps in its Senior Executive Service workforce. Preliminary assessment results indicate minimal competency gaps, with the largest gaps being in teambuilding, influencing and negotiating, technology management, and influencing others. DOD did not, however, include any information on the department's Senior Level and Senior Technical workforces. According to DOD, these two workforces are highly developed and specialized and, as a result, they do not assess these workforces in the same manner as the Senior Executive Service. DOD also did not include any information on assessments of gaps in the department's Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service or Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces.</p>	
<p><b>4. An assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities, as determined under the total force management policies and procedures established under 10 U.S.C. § 129a [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(B)]</b></p>	
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan does not address this requirement because the plan did not identify the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. The plan did, however, provide a breakdown of the projected requirements for each of the department's Civilian Senior Leader workforce categories through fiscal year 2018, and also stated that the department may use military personnel, among others, to fill gaps in its Civilian Senior Leader workforce. However, the plan did not discuss any requirements for the department's senior military personnel. The plan further stated that there is little to no need for a contractor workforce at the Civilian Senior Leader workforce level.</p>	

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Civilian Senior Leader workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>5. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific recruiting and retention goals, especially in areas identified as critical skills and competencies, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such goals and the funding needed to achieve such goals [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(A)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan discussed the process DOD uses to address gaps in the competencies in its Senior Executive Service workforce and how that process is used for recruiting and retention, but the plan did not include specific recruiting and retention goals. This process also did not include the Senior Level and Senior Technical workforces. Further, while the plan stated that DOD funded approximately \$949,000 towards executive development and coaching, it was not immediately clear how these actions addressed recruiting and retention issues and the plan did not identify whether or how much funding will be needed in the future. The plan also did not include a discussion of the department's Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service or Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces.</p>	○
<p><b>6. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian employee workforce of the department, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such strategies and the funding needed to implement such strategies [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(B)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan described the process and framework used to improve and develop the Senior Executive Service workforce. The plan also stated that information from the process will assist the department in closing gaps as more data are obtained. In addition, the plan discussed the department's comprehensive approach to training and development for executives and provided examples that address critical leadership competencies. The plan did not include any information on the funding needed to implement such strategies. Further, the plan did not include any information on specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the department's Senior Level, Senior Technical, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, or Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces.</p>	○
<p><b>7. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies including any incentives necessary to attract or retain any civilian personnel possessing the skills and competencies identified [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan stated a significant method of incentivizing Senior Executive Service is to offer individual career and developmental opportunities and geographic assignment preferences. The plan also stated that recruiting for the Senior Level and Senior Technical workforces is a government-wide concern and DOD is engaged in a White House Initiative to address this issue. The plan, however, did not provide information on incentives necessary to attract or retain Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service or Defense Intelligence Senior Level workforces.</p>	○
<p><b>8. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies including any changes in the number of personnel authorized in any category of personnel listed in subsection (f)(1)a or in the acquisition workforce that may be needed to address such gaps and effectively meet the needs of the department [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(D)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan addresses this requirement. The plan stated that in fiscal year 2013 DOD completed implementation of changes to the number of personnel in its Civilian Senior Leader workforces based on the results of the department's 2011 efficiency initiative. Additionally, projections in the plan show changes to the number of personnel in each category of DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce through fiscal year 2018. DOD's acquisition workforce is addressed in a separate plan.</p>	●

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Civilian Senior Leader workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>9. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies including any changes in resources or in the rates or methods of pay for any category of personnel listed in subsection (f)(1)a or in the acquisition workforce that may be needed to address inequities and ensure that the department has full access to appropriately qualified personnel to address such gaps and meet the needs of the Department [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(E)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan stated that the department has performance-management systems in place to help ensure compensation for its Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, and Senior Technical workforces. DOD did not, however, provide any information related to the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service or Defense Intelligence Senior Leader workforces. DOD's acquisition workforce is addressed in a separate plan.</p>	●
<p><b>10. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes any legislative changes that may be necessary to achieve its recruiting and retention goals [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(F)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan addresses this requirement. The plan provided information on a proposed legislative change that would require DOD to report only on its Senior Executive Service and Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, while the appropriate functional community would report on Senior Level and Senior Technical workforces. The proposal also seeks to eliminate the requirement to report on contractors for the senior-leader workforce.</p>	●
<p><b>11. Specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, motivating, and designing career paths and career opportunities [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan addresses this requirement. The plan identified the department's effort to revise the scope of its Defense Executive Advisory Board. This effort, according to the plan, will help the department maintain the caliber of its Senior Executive Service leadership, and will include a review of the board's charter. In addition, the plan discussed efforts by the department to promote diversity and interest among civilian employees to join the executive ranks.</p>	●
<p><b>12. Specific steps that the department has taken or plans to take to ensure that such workforce is managed in compliance with the requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 129 and the policies and procedures established under 10 U.S.C. § 129a [10 U.S.C. § 115b(c)(2)(D)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Civilian Senior Leader workforce plan addresses this requirement. According to the plan, Section 129 of Title 10 of the United States Code requires that DOD's civilian personnel be managed solely on the basis of (1) workload required to carry out the functions and activities of the department, (2) the funds made available each fiscal year to the department and (3) the total force management policies and procedures established under section 129a of Title 10 of the United States Code. DOD's plan stated that the department requires two specific sets of actions. First, manpower officials determine the department's workforce requirements based on mission requirements, workload, and prescribed performance objectives. Second, the plan states that components are expected to review required resources annually and report their requirements to maintain current Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, and Senior Technical workforce allocations on a biennial basis, ranking all requirements by priority in relation to DOD's mission and justifying funding for these positions.</p>	●

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565

Legend:

- = Addressed—workforce plan discussed all aspects of the statutory requirement
- = Partially Addressed—workforce plan discussed some aspects of the statutory requirement
- = Not Addressed—workforce plan did not discuss any aspects of the statutory requirement

Notes: Data are from DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.

**Appendix IV: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent to Which DOD’s Civilian Workforce Plan Addresses Statutory Requirements**

<sup>a</sup>This reference likely should be read as referring to subparagraph (g)(1), which, prior to recent statutory amendments, was designated as subparagraph (f)(1). The current subsection (f) has no subparagraph (1).

<sup>b</sup>The Department of Defense Executive Advisory Board is a board of Senior Executive Service leaders and general and flag officers across the components that advises the Deputy Secretary of Defense and other DOD senior leaders on the policy and management of Senior Executive Service career executives, as established by DOD Directive 1403.03, The Career Lifecycle Management of the Senior Executive Service Leaders Within the Department of Defense (Oct. 25, 2007).

**Table 6: GAO’s Assessment of the Extent to Which DOD’s Financial Management Workforce Plan Addresses the Statutory Requirements in Section 115b of Title 10 of the United States Code**

Financial Management workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>1. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies of the existing civilian employee workforce of the department and projected trends in that workforce based on expected losses due to retirement and other attrition [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD’s Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. DOD identified 4 of the community’s 13 occupational series as mission-critical occupations that, according to DOD officials, constitute the critical skills for the existing Financial Management workforce. The community also identified the projected trends associated with those workforces due to retirement. Further, the community provided charts identifying projected targets for each mission-critical occupation through fiscal year 2017.</p> <p>The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) also led an initiative that established a common taxonomy for competencies for individual financial-management occupations. This initiative resulted in the identification of 23 enterprise-wide financial-management competencies, which, according to the plan, are the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities that financial personnel need to meet the 21st-century national security mission. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) documented the 23 enterprise-wide competencies in a 2011 memorandum. According to officials in the Comptroller’s office, the office considers these competencies valid until a refresh is required—currently scheduled for fiscal year 2015. In addition, the community aligned the enterprise-wide competencies with the community’s existing mission-critical occupations and non-mission-critical occupations. For example, the financial administrative series has five competencies that are specific to that occupational series, including financial-management analysis, decision support, and financial reporting, among others, while one—financial stewardship—is an enterprise-wide competency for the entire financial-management community. Although not specifically stated in the plan, according to officials, DOD conducted competency assessments for the Financial Management functional community’s mission-critical occupations from April 7 to May 9, 2014, using the Defense Competency Assessment Tool. According to officials, the results of this assessment will be available by July 2014. However, we determined that DOD partially addressed this requirement because the assessment was not complete at the time of our review and the plan did not include details or the results of such an assessment of the community’s current critical competencies.</p>	<p>①</p>

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Financial Management workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>2. An assessment of the critical skills and competencies that will be needed in the future within the civilian employee workforce by the Department of Defense to support national security requirements and effectively manage the department during the five-year period corresponding to the current Future Years Defense Program [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(A)]</b></p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. The Financial Management functional community identified four mission-critical occupations that constitute the workforce's critical skills, conducted a workforce analysis, and provided forecasts specifically for those four workforces for the 5 out-years.</p> <p>In addition, the Comptroller-led initiative to establish a common taxonomy for competencies for individual financial-management occupations resulted in the identification of 23 enterprise-wide financial-management competencies. The Comptroller documented the 23 enterprise-wide competencies in a memorandum that, according to officials, the office considers to be valid until a refresh is required. In addition, the community aligned the enterprise-wide competencies with the existing mission-critical occupations and non-mission-critical occupations. As previously stated, DOD conducted an assessment of mission-critical occupation's competencies from April 7 to May 9, 2014. The results of this assessment will likely enable DOD to determine if it has identified the right competencies for this community for the next 5 years. According to officials, the results of this assessment will be available by July 2014. However, we determined that DOD partially addressed this requirement because the assessment is not complete and the plan did not include details or the results of such an assessment of the community's future critical competencies.</p>	
<p><b>3. An assessment of gaps in the existing or projected civilian employee workforce of the department that should be addressed to ensure that the department has continued access to the critical skills and competencies it needs [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(D)]</b></p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan included information on staffing gap analyses for the community's four mission-critical occupations, using fiscal year 2012 workforce data. The Financial Management functional community requested these data from 36 DOD organizations. The functional community's forecasts found that what the plan characterized as small gaps in the Financial Administration series and the Auditing series would close during the fiscal year 2013-2018 time frame. For example, the plan stated that the Financial Administration series had the largest gap of 5.9 percent. The plan further stated that the functional community did not identify any significant gaps in the Accounting series and Budget Analysis series.</p> <p>However, while the Financial Management functional community's plan discusses these staffing gaps, it did not include competency-gap analyses for its mission-critical occupations or for the entire Financial Management workforce. According to officials from the Comptroller's office, in April and the first part of May 2014, DOD used the Defense Competency Assessment Tool—an enterprise-wide tool designed to assess competency gaps—that is expected to provide financial-management leadership with workforce data that will assist in identifying Financial Management workforce competency gaps.</p>	
<p><b>4. An assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities, as determined under the total force management policies and procedures established under 10 U.S.C. § 129a 10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(A) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(1)(B)]</b></p>	<p>0</p>
<p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan does not address this requirement. Specifically, the community did not provide an assessment of the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel capabilities. The plan focused primarily on the civilian Financial Management workforce but only provided demographic information on civilians in the mission-critical occupations. According to the plan, the Financial Management community also collected data for authorized and assigned military officers, warrant officers, and enlisted financial-management personnel, but did not provide similar demographic and projected target data for the military portion of the workforce.</p>	

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Financial Management workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>5. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific recruiting and retention goals, especially in areas identified as critical skills and competencies, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such goals and the funding needed to achieve such goals [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(A)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan identified near-term opportunities to improve the workforce, and stated that the Financial Management workforce actively participated in the new Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program to recruit and develop the next generation of leaders who possess needed technical and leadership competencies to meet the future leadership requirements of the department. As part of this program, the Financial Management community funded 30 participants for this leadership program in fiscal year 2012 and expected to fund an additional 30 in fiscal year 2013. The plan, however, did not identify specific recruiting and retention goals. The Financial Management functional community also did not include the funding needed to achieve the goals associated with this program.</p>	<p>①</p>
<p><b>6. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes specific strategies for developing, training, deploying, compensating, and motivating the civilian employee workforce of the department, including the program objectives of the department to be achieved through such strategies and the funding needed to implement such strategies [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(B)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan included a Mission Critical Occupation Strategy and Action Plan focused on the DOD Financial Management Certification Program. This community intends to use this strategy to develop a Financial Management workforce with the necessary competencies. According to the details of the strategy, DOD is consolidating multiple Financial Management workforce development efforts across DOD into a mandatory cohesive program to effectively educate, train, and certify financial-management personnel (civilian and military). This effort includes key financial-management and leadership competencies and will enable the Financial Management community to assess and close gaps.</p> <p>Although the plan included a specific strategy for, among other things, developing and training the Financial Management workforce, the plan did not identify funding needed for that strategy. The plan stated only that the community coordinated funding needs with DOD's components and that these funding needs were included in the fiscal year 2014 President's Budget.</p> <p>Officials from the Comptroller's office told us that, as part of the fiscal year 2014 President's Budget process, their office engaged with the military departments to assess the adequacy of current planned funding to implement and sustain the program. As a result of those efforts, approximately \$13 million to \$14 million per year was realigned across the fiscal year 2014-2018 Future Years Defense Program to address training shortfalls and to provide funding for additional web-based course development.</p>	<p>①</p>
<p><b>7. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies including any incentives necessary to attract or retain any civilian personnel possessing the skills and competencies identified [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan partially addresses this requirement. The plan provided some information on incentives—such as full permanent change-of-station reimbursement and family-friendly workplace, among others—used at the mid and senior levels of the Financial Management workforce, but it did not identify how the community used or uses these incentives to address gaps in the Financial Management workforce's critical skills and competencies.</p>	<p>①</p>

**Appendix IV: GAO's Assessment of the Extent  
to Which DOD's Civilian Workforce Plan  
Addresses Statutory Requirements**

Financial Management workforce statutory requirements and comments	Our assessment
<p><b>8. A plan of action for developing and reshaping the civilian employee workforce of the department to address the gaps in critical skills and competencies that includes any legislative changes that may be necessary to achieve its recruiting and retention goals [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(B) referencing 10 U.S.C. § 115b(b)(2)(F)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan did not address this requirement. In this section of the report DOD did not address whether or not additional legislative changes are necessary to achieve the community's recruiting and retention goals, while other portions of the plan either provided proposed legislative changes or indicated that no further changes were necessary.</p>	O
<p><b>9. Specific steps that the department has taken or plans to take to develop appropriate career paths for civilian employees in the financial management field and to implement the requirements of 10 U.S.C. § 1599d [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(C)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan addresses this requirement. The plan acknowledged that the department has not established enterprise-wide career paths for the 13 occupational series that constitute the financial-management career field. The plan also indicated, however, that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) began working on enterprise-wide career paths by collecting component-specific roadmaps from eight of the financial-management components with the largest concentration of financial-management personnel. The Comptroller's office is reviewing these roadmaps for commonalities from an enterprise-wide perspective and will report progress on the development of enterprise-wide career paths in the fiscal year 2014-2019 Strategic Workforce Plan. The plan also outlined six major milestones for developing the enterprise-wide financial-management career paths, beginning with collecting the remaining component-specific career paths.</p> <p>Regarding implementation of the requirements of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, (Pub. L. No. 112-81, § 1051 [2011], codified as amended at 10 U.S.C. § 1599d), which provided DOD the authority to prescribe certification and credentialing standards for the Financial Management community, according to officials DOD developed its course-based Financial Management Certification Program in response to the statute.</p>	●
<p><b>10. A plan for funding needed improvements in the financial management workforce of the department through the period of the current Future Years Defense Program including a description of any continuing shortfalls in funding available for that workforce [10 U.S.C. § 115b(e)(2)(D)]</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DOD's Financial Management functional community plan does not address this requirement. The plan stated that the Financial Management Certification Program is the primary strategy to improve the Financial Management workforce. The department intends for the Financial Management Certification Program to consolidate multiple financial management development efforts across DOD into a mandatory cohesive program to effectively educate, train, and certify financial-management personnel. In addition, according to the plan, the community has also identified a number of near-term opportunities to meet the current workforce demands. However, DOD did not include a plan for funding such improvements, nor did it address whether the potential for shortfalls exists currently or in the future.</p>	O

Source: GAO analysis of DOD data. | GAO-14-565

Legend:

- = Addressed—workforce plan discussed aspects of the statutory requirement
- ◐ = Partially Addressed—workforce plan discussed some aspects of the statutory requirement
- O = Not Addressed—workforce plan did not discuss any aspects of the statutory requirement

Note: Data are from DOD's Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan.



# Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Defense



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DEFENSE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY SERVICE  
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350

Ms. Brenda Farrell  
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW,  
Washington, DC 20548

JUN 27 2014

Dear Ms. Farrell:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO Draft Report, GAO-14-565, "HUMAN CAPITAL: DOD Should Fully Develop Its Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan to Aid Decision Makers," dated June 10, 2014, (GAO Code 351873). Please find the DoD concurrence with the enclosed recommendation.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review the draft report and provide comments. This affords us an opportunity to publicly thank the Assistant Director and Analyst-in-Charge and their team for their extensive review of the DoD Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) and the resultant observations that help us consider the perspectives of an outside agency. DoD remains fully committed to meeting all statutory requirements, and has dedicated extensive resources to that end.

DoD is confident that with the publishing of each successive plan, GAO and Congress will see marked improvement, even as the functional communities continue to benefit today from the rigor of the strategic workforce planning process. Thank you for taking the time to appreciate DoD's commitment to SWP, how it is instrumental in building appreciation for the civilian workforce who deliver the important mission of the DoD.

Questions regarding this response should be directed to Ms. Vickie Smith, vickie.smith@cpms.osd.mil, telephone 571-372-2122.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lynne E. Baldridge", is positioned above the typed name.

Lynne E. Baldridge, SES  
HR Strategic Programs  
DCPAS

Enclosure:  
As stated

**GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED JUNE 10, 2014  
GAO-14-565 (GAO CODE 351873)**

**“HUMAN CAPITAL: DOD SHOULD FULLY DEVELOP ITS CIVILIAN STRATEGIC  
WORKFORCE PLAN TO AID DECISION MAKERS”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS  
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATION**

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) align DoD’s strategic workforce plan with the budget and management workforce initiatives, such as those to address recruiting, retention, and readiness issues associated with declining morale among its civilian workforces.

**DoD RESPONSE:** Concur. GAO recognized that the strategies identified by the functional communities to address recruiting, retention and readiness issues in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-2018 Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) were indeed impacted by the funding constraints levied within the DoD during sequestration. As noted in later documents, there was measurable decline in DoD civilian workforce morale during the austerity experienced even as the FY 2013-2018 SWP was in final coordination. The full impact of the funding restrictions is still playing out within each functional community. To that end, and the future viability of strategies which require funding, USD (P&R) will lead a review of the various impact opportunities to support SWP requirements in the budget formulation process. This review will complete and begin implementation for the FY 2016 budget cycle.

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# Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

Brenda S. Farrell, (202) 512-3604 or [farrellb@gao.gov](mailto:farrellb@gao.gov)

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the above named contact, David Moser, Assistant Director; James Kernen; Steven Lozano; Brian Pegram; Michael Pose; Terry Richardson; Jennifer Weber; Erik Wilkins-McKee; and Michael Willems made key contributions to this report.

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