



Highlights of [GAO-12-487](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

FEMA, within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), employs a workforce of over 18,000 people, who are responsible for leading and supporting the nation in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating all hazards. GAO reported in 2007 and 2011 that changes in FEMA's workforce, workload, and composition have created challenges in FEMA's ability to meet the agency's varied responsibilities and train its staff appropriately. GAO was asked to review FEMA's workforce planning and training efforts. This report addresses: the extent to which FEMA has (1) integrated its workforce planning and training efforts, (2) incorporated strategic management principles into these efforts, and (3) systematically gathered workforce and training data to inform its human capital decisions. GAO reviewed relevant documentation that describes FEMA's agencywide workforce planning and training efforts, such as the agency's strategic plan, reviewed and assessed FEMA's strategic planning documents, and interviewed DHS and FEMA program and regional office officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that FEMA: identify long-term quantifiable mission-critical goals; establish a time frame for completing the development of quantifiable performance measures; establish lines of authority for agencywide workforce planning and training efforts; and develop systematic processes to collect and analyze workforce and training data. DHS concurred with all recommendations.

View [GAO-12-487](#). For more information, contact David C. Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or maurerd@gao.gov.

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FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Workforce Planning and Training Could Be Enhanced by Incorporating Strategic Management Principles

What GAO Found

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is taking steps to integrate its workforce planning and training efforts across the agency consistent with critical success factors for strategic human capital management such as initiating working groups to coordinate related activities, but its efforts are in the early stages. Until recently FEMA's efforts related to workforce planning have been independently conducted by various offices across the agency. In January 2012, FEMA human capital officials reported that they began integrating agencywide workforce planning initiatives underway by other program offices, such as FEMA's Qualification System, which was developed to establish qualification requirements for FEMA's workforce for deployment purposes, among other things. Additionally, FEMA's Human Capital Office plans to release a directive that, according to officials, will address the need for integrating the agency's training efforts consistent with critical success factors for strategic human capital management. Having integrated workforce planning and training could help FEMA ensure that it has the properly sized and skilled workforce to effectively meet its mission. However, the effectiveness of these integration efforts is dependent upon FEMA following through with its plans and it is, therefore, too early to assess their impact.

FEMA has taken steps to incorporate some strategic management principles into its workforce planning and training efforts but could incorporate additional principles to ensure a more strategic approach is used to address longstanding management challenges. Specifically, FEMA's leadership has demonstrated commitment to effectively plan for and train its workforce, but has not established specific long-term goals, such as integrating agencywide training efforts, or quantifiable annual performance measures for these efforts. Such goals and metrics could help ensure accountability for FEMA's workforce planning and training. Further, FEMA's workforce planning and training could be enhanced by establishing lines of authority for these efforts. For example, FEMA's Human Capital Office is responsible for providing leadership and direction for the agency's human capital programs, but officials said that they have little authority over workforce planning efforts across the agency. Identifying lines of authority could help provide a strategic focus to FEMA's workforce planning and training and ensure the agency is held accountable for the success of these efforts.

FEMA has not developed processes to systematically collect and analyze agencywide workforce and training data that could be used to better inform its decision making. Specifically, the contractor who conducted a March 2010 baseline assessment of FEMA's workforce reported that they gathered workforce data from three different databases to conduct their analysis, noting that conflicting data from these databases had to be resolved to make the information useable for their analysis. Additionally, FEMA has taken steps to track training information, but its tracking processes do not provide a reliable account of all training activities of FEMA employees. Developing systematic processes to collect and analyze its agencywide workforce and training data could help FEMA make more informed decisions.