

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106828](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

NMB was created by a 1934 amendment to the Railway Labor Act. It plays a critical role in helping airline and railway carriers resolve labor disputes to avoid work stoppages and prevent disruptions to interstate commerce.

The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 includes a provision for GAO to evaluate NMB programs and activities every 2 years. Between 2013 and 2022, GAO issued five reports that included a total of 18 recommendations. As of the start of this review in May 2023, NMB had implemented 14 of those recommendations.

This sixth report examines (1) the extent to which NMB has taken actions to implement the four remaining recommendations from GAO's prior reports; and (2) any other challenges NMB faces in key management areas and in overseeing its operations.

GAO reviewed relevant federal laws and regulations and examined NMB documents, plans, policies, and practices. GAO also interviewed officials from NMB, an NMB advisory group, the NLRB IG, and NMB's independent financial auditor.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making four recommendations to NMB to establish procedures to (1) regularly update its workforce and succession plan, (2) regularly update its training policy, (3) ensure staff with additional roles receive necessary training, and (4) ensure its personnel policies are complete and up to date. NMB agreed with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-24-106828](#). For more information, contact John D. Sawyer at (202) 512-7215 or [sawyerj@gao.gov](mailto:sawyerj@gao.gov).

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# NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

## Agency Should Take Steps to Regularly Update Its Plans and Policies and Ensure Staff Receive Necessary Training

### What GAO Found

The National Mediation Board (NMB), which facilitates labor relations for railroads and airlines, has implemented two of GAO's four remaining recommendations from past reports. Specifically, NMB has updated its privacy policy and developed a process to track issues raised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Inspector General's (IG) office, which operates a hotline on NMB's behalf. However, NMB has not yet fully implemented the other two recommendations. NMB has not updated its continuity of operations plan, a key component of an information security program. The agency also continues to use two cloud services that are not federally approved. By not fully implementing these recommendations, NMB is increasingly vulnerable to information security risks to its data and systems.

### Status of GAO Recommendations to the National Mediation Board

Status	 Implemented	 Not fully implemented	 Not fully implemented	 Implemented
Issue area	<b>Information privacy</b>	<b>Information security</b>	<b>Cloud services authorizations</b>	<b>Tracking issues</b> (From NLRB Inspector General)
Year made	2013	2013	2020	2022

Source: GAO analysis of National Mediation Board information. | GAO-24-106828

NLRB= National Labor Relations Board

In addition, NMB faces challenges related to its workforce planning, training, and personnel policies.

- NMB has no procedures for regularly reviewing and updating its workforce and succession plan. NMB has had difficulty filling its many vacant positions, and more than half of NMB's current staff are eligible for retirement within the next 5 years. NMB has initiated efforts to update the plan, but without procedures for keeping it up to date, NMB will not be positioned to effectively manage its workforce needs.
- NMB lacks procedures for regularly updating its training policy. Moreover, some officials have been assigned essential duties outside of their primary expertise but received little training related to these roles. Without procedures to keep NMB's training policy up to date, and sufficient training for officials with essential additional roles, NMB cannot ensure all officials have the knowledge and skills required to meet the agency's mission.
- NMB also lacks procedures for ensuring its personnel policies are complete and updated. Without such procedures, NMB risks operating without needed policies or being out of compliance with federal regulations.