



Highlights of [GAO-04-817T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks precipitated a shift in how the FBI uses its investigative and intelligence resources to prevent future terrorist incidents. The attacks led to the FBI's commitment to transform and reorganize itself. Today's testimony discusses (1) the FBI's progress in transforming to focus on counterterrorism and intelligence-related priorities, (2) competition the FBI faces from other agencies and the private sector for intelligence staff, and (3) human capital flexibilities that may enhance the FBI's ability to address its priorities.

## FBI TRANSFORMATION

# Human Capital Strategies May Assist the FBI in Its Commitment to Address Its Top Priorities

## What GAO Found

FBI has made significant progress in its transformation efforts since GAO last testified before this Subcommittee in June 2003. The FBI's organizational changes to enhance its intelligence capability and realigned staff resources to counterterrorism and counterintelligence priority areas, among other things, are encouraging. However, even with increased numbers of agents in the priority areas, the FBI continues to have to temporarily re-assign additional agents to meet its goal of following all counterterrorism-related leads or threats.

The FBI has faced difficulties retaining—and competing with other government agencies and the private sector for—staff with intelligence knowledge, skills, and abilities. These difficulties may in part result from the fact that the FBI's career ladder for intelligence analysts is truncated compared with similar career ladders at some other federal agencies. For example, the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency maintain a career ladder for their intelligence staff that includes both senior executive (managerial) and senior level (nonmanagerial) positions. While the FBI has actively moved towards establishing a GS 15 level for intelligence staff, this would still not create a level playing field with the rest of the intelligence community given that other agencies maintain higher level positions. Should a decision be made to institute a senior executive and senior level positions, the FBI will need to develop and implement a carefully crafted plan that includes specific details on how such an intelligence career service would relate into its strategic plan and strategic human capital plan, the expectations and qualifications for positions, and how performance would be measured.

GAO has found that the leaders of agencies such as the FBI can better tailor their human capital strategies to better meet their mission by identifying, assessing, and **first** making use of all appropriate human capital flexibilities. The FBI has used a variety of available human capital flexibilities to help them recruit and retain staff. **Second**, agencies then consider options that require legislative changes. In those cases, information should be gathered to appropriately demonstrate the case for change. Because the FBI is at the forefront of protecting the nation against terrorist threats, proposals to enhance its capacity from a human capital standpoint should be carefully considered.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-817T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-817T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Laurie Ekstrand on (202) 512-8777 or [ekstrandl@gao.gov](mailto:ekstrandl@gao.gov).