



Highlights of [GAO-07-1002T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

Telework continues to receive attention within Congress and federal agencies as a human capital strategy that offers various flexibilities to both employers and employees, including the capacity to continue operations during emergency events, as well as benefits to society, such as decreased energy use and pollution.

This statement highlights some of GAO's prior work on federal telework programs, including key practices for successful implementation of telework initiatives, identified in a 2003 GAO report and a 2005 GAO analysis of telework program definitions and methods in five federal agencies. In addition, the statement discusses GAO observations on the Telework Enhancement Act of 2007, S. 1000.

## What GAO Recommends

This statement makes no new recommendations but reiterates that Congress should determine ways to promote more consistent telework definitions and measures. In particular, Congress might want to have the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Chief Human Capital Officers Council develop definitions and measures that would allow for a more meaningful assessment of progress in agency telework programs.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1002T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-1002T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Bernice Steinhardt at (202) 512-6806 or [steinhardtb@gao.gov](mailto:steinhardtb@gao.gov).

# HUMAN CAPITAL

## Greater Focus on Results in Telework Programs Needed

### What GAO Found

Through a number of legislative actions, Congress has indicated its desire that agencies create telework programs to accomplish a number of positive outcomes. Many of the current federal programs were developed in response to a 2000 law that required each executive branch agency to establish a telework policy under which eligible employees may participate in telecommuting to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance. The legislative framework has provided the OPM and the General Services Administration (GSA) with lead roles for the governmentwide telework initiative, providing services and resources to support and encourage telework. Although agency telework policies meet common requirements and often share characteristics, each agency is responsible for developing its own policy to fit its mission and culture.

In a 2003 report, GAO identified a number of key practices that federal agencies should implement in developing their telework programs. Four of these were closely aligned with managing for program results: (1) developing a business case for telework, (2) establishing measurable telework program goals, (3) establishing systems to collect data for telework program evaluation, and (4) identifying problems and making appropriate adjustments. None of the four agencies we reviewed, however, had effectively implemented any of these practices. In a related review of five other agencies in 2005, GAO reported that none of the agencies had the capability to track who was actually teleworking or how frequently, relying mostly on the number of telework agreements as the measure of program participation.

S. 1000 is intended to enhance the existing legislative framework and provides that all employees of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches are eligible for telework except in some circumstances related to an employee's duties and functions. The bill also recognizes the importance of leadership in promoting an agency's telework program by requiring the appointment of a senior-level management official to perform several functions to promote and enhance telework opportunities. GAO's statement suggests changes to the assignment of responsibilities for rating and reporting along with changes to make the responsibilities for heads of agency and entities in the legislative and judicial branches more consistent with those of executive branch officials. The statement also points out several provisions of S. 1000 that are not clear in relation to existing legislation.