



# ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

## Progress and Challenges in Implementing the Office of Personnel Management's Initiatives

Highlights of [GAO-03-1169T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

Electronic government (e-government) refers to the use of information technology (IT), including Web-based Internet applications, to enhance access to and delivery of government information and services, as well as to improve the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is managing five e-government initiatives whose goal is to transform the way OPM oversees the government's human capital functions. These 5 initiatives are among 25 identified by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as foremost in the drive toward e-government transformation. The 25 initiatives have ambitious goals, including eliminating redundant, nonintegrated business operations and systems and improving service to citizens by an order of magnitude. Achieving these results, according to OMB, could produce billions of dollars in savings from improved operational efficiency.

In today's testimony, among other things, GAO identifies the challenges facing OPM as it moves forward in implementing the five human capital initiatives.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1169T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1169T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or [koontzl@gao.gov](mailto:koontzl@gao.gov).

### What GAO Found

OPM's five e-government initiatives (summarized in the table) are an ambitious attempt to transform the way human capital functions and services are carried out in the federal government. OPM faces several challenges that, if not fully met, could prevent it from meeting its objectives and realizing projected improvements and dollar savings.

For instance, in order to meet a perceived need for quick results, alterations have been made to the acquisition plans for several of the 25 OMB-sponsored e-government initiatives, including OPM's Recruitment One-Stop initiative. In OPM's recent decision to continue with its awarded contract for Recruitment One-Stop, despite a successful bid protest by Symplicity Corporation, agency officials perceived the need for quick results to be one factor outweighing the importance of issues raised by GAO concerning the conduct of the procurement. However, by taking this course, OPM risks alienating potential supporters of its initiative.

Further, managing the migration from agency-specific systems to consolidated systems will be a challenge, because agencies may be required to take positive action to shut down existing systems and invest in additional or updated technology to use the new, consolidated systems resulting from OPM's five initiatives. Consequently, it will be crucial for OPM to implement effective change management and communication policies. In addition, technical integration across agencies to support consolidation, including the development of standards, is a formidable task.

Finally, OPM also faces a significant challenge in realistically estimating the cost savings to be derived from these initiatives. In many cases, estimates of cost savings are only loosely based on measures that are difficult to quantify, such as the average cost of performing a certain function across the government. To be truly effective in meeting its goals, OPM needs to establish complete, meaningful, and quantitative measures of cost savings.

#### Overview of OPM's Five E-Government Initiatives

Initiative	Purpose
Recruitment One-Stop	Provide a one-stop Web site for federal job seekers through a single application point that provides a range of information and tools, including vacancy information, application submission, status tracking, and other tools.
e-Clearance	Improve the efficiency and speed by which federal government clearances are granted to maximize the efficiency of collecting data, scheduling cases, locating existing investigations and clearances, and retrieving archived records.
Enterprise Human Resources Integration	Provide a data repository of standardized core human resource data to replace the paper Official Personnel File, with an Official Electronic Record, enabling the electronic exchange of information between agencies during an employee's government career.
e-Training	Support development of the federal workforce through simplified, one-stop access to high-quality Internet-based training products and services.
e-Payroll	Improve federal payroll operations by consolidating 22 existing federal payroll system providers; simplifying and standardizing policies and procedures; and better integrating federal payroll, human resources, and finance functions.

Source: GAO analysis of OPM and OMB documents.