

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-105266](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

NMB, created by a 1934 amendment to the Railway Labor Act, plays a critical role in helping airline and railway carriers resolve labor disputes to avoid work stoppages. The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 included a provision for GAO to evaluate NMB programs and activities every 2 years. GAO previously issued four reports between 2013 and 2020 that included a cumulative total of 17 recommendations to NMB. As of its 2020 report, NMB had implemented seven of those recommendations.

This fifth report examines (1) the extent to which NMB has taken actions to fully implement GAO's remaining 10 open recommendations; and (2) NMB's process to identify, track, and address management and oversight challenges. GAO reviewed relevant federal laws and regulations; examined NMB documents, plans, policies, and practices; and interviewed officials from NMB, NLRB IG, and an NMB advisory group.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that NMB implement a systematic process to track and address issues reported to it by the NLRB IG. NMB agreed with this recommendation.

View [GAO-22-105266](#). For more information, contact Dawn Locke at (202) 512-7215 or locked@gao.gov.

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RAIL AND AIR LABOR RELATIONS

National Mediation Board Made Progress on GAO Recommendations but Needs to Address Management Issues

What GAO Found

The National Mediation Board (NMB), which facilitates labor relations for railroads and airlines, has implemented seven of GAO's 10 remaining recommendations related to internal policies and processes (see figure). While NMB has taken some actions to address the remaining three recommendations on information privacy, security, and cloud services, it has not yet fully implemented them. Specifically, NMB has not:

- fully updated its policies and procedures for information privacy protections;
- conducted security testing and evaluation of all its major systems; and
- used only federally approved cloud services, as required.

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

Recommendation area			
Organizational Climate Assessment (2018)	●	Audit Protocols Process (2020)	●
Travel Policy (2018)	●	Information Technology Policies (2020)	●
Telework Policy (2018)	●	Information Privacy (2013)	⊗
Rail Arbitration Case Backlog (2018)	●	Information Security (2013)	⊗
Annual Appropriations Monitoring (2020)	●	Cloud Services Authorization (2020)	⊗

● Implemented ⊗ Not fully implemented (ranges from limited progress to substantial progress)

Source: GAO analysis of National Mediation Board documents and information. | [GAO-22-105266](#)

NMB has no authorized Inspector General (IG) and therefore relies on third-party entities, including GAO, to identify issues and challenges. In addition, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) IG manages a hotline for NMB employees to report issues. Under its memorandum of understanding with NMB, the NLRB IG is to inform NMB of issues raised through the hotline; the IG may also communicate other NMB management concerns that come to its attention.

However, NMB lacks a systematic process to track and address all issues that the NLRB IG reports to it. NMB officials said there is currently no such process in place, in part, because it is a small agency with competing interests and priorities. Nevertheless, without a systematic process to track and address issues, NMB cannot ensure corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner.