

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-240](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

DOD plans to spend about \$65 billion from fiscal year 2019 to 2023 on space acquisition programs—including satellites, launch vehicles, ground components, and user equipment. DOD’s space acquisition personnel perform a variety of activities, such as preparing and reviewing acquisition documents, to manage or oversee programs that develop or procure space capabilities. DOD recently announced it plans to establish a new Space Development Agency and a United States Space Command.

A House Report accompanying a bill for the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act contained a provision for GAO to review DOD’s space acquisition workforce. This report examines, among other things, what is known about the size, mix, and location of that workforce. GAO collected data from DOD’s acquisition workforce data systems and multiple space acquisition organizations. GAO interviewed officials from these organizations and from a non-generalizable sample of 10 space acquisition programs, representing a range of dollar values and stages in the acquisition process.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD (1) identifies the universe of its space acquisition programs and the organizations that support them and (2) collects and maintains data on the workforce that supports these programs. DOD agreed with the first recommendation, but not the second. GAO revised the second recommendation to address DOD’s concerns.

View [GAO-19-240](#). For more information, contact Jon Ludwigson at (202) 512-4841 or [ludwigsonj@gao.gov](mailto:ludwigsonj@gao.gov).

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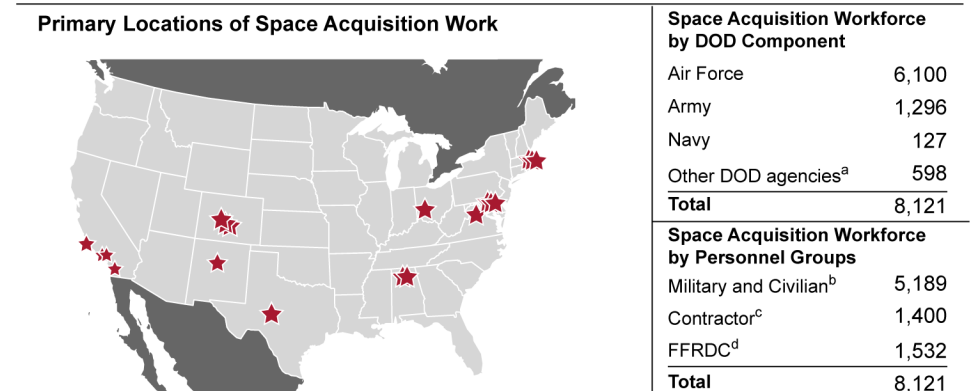
# DEFENSE SPACE SYSTEMS

## DOD Should Collect and Maintain Data on Its Space Acquisition Workforce

### What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) does not routinely monitor the size, mix, and location of its space acquisition workforce. However, data GAO collected and aggregated from multiple DOD space acquisition organizations show that at least 8,000 personnel in multiple locations nationwide were working on space acquisition activities at the end of 2017 (see figure). Also as shown, military and civilian personnel comprise the majority of the overall workforce, while contractor and Federally Funded Research and Development Center personnel also provide support.

**Primary Locations and Size of Department of Defense (DOD) Space Acquisition Workforce Identified by GAO as of December 31, 2017**



<sup>a</sup> Other DOD agencies include the Defense Contract Management Agency and the Missile Defense Agency.

<sup>b</sup> Number of Military and Civilian personnel reflects those working 50 percent or more of their time on space acquisitions.

<sup>c</sup> Number of contractor personnel reflects full-time equivalents, which may have been performed by more than one person.

<sup>d</sup> Number of Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) personnel reflects staff-years of technical effort equivalents, which may have been performed by more than one person.

Source: GAO presentation of DOD documentation (data); Map Resources (map). | GAO-19-240

Several factors hinder DOD’s ability to collect data needed for a comprehensive view of its space acquisition workforce:

- DOD does not maintain a complete list of its space acquisition programs;
- DOD’s workforce data systems are not configured to identify personnel working on space acquisition activities; and
- DOD space acquisition personnel are dispersed across organizations and some personnel support both space and non-space programs.

Without complete and accurate data, DOD cannot assess gaps in the overall capabilities of the space acquisition workforce. Identifying space programs and collecting such data would also better position DOD to ensure that the appropriate space acquisition personnel are assigned to the new Space Development Agency and the United States Space Command. Finally, comprehensive data on the space acquisition workforce would also be beneficial to support DOD’s efforts related to its recent legislative proposal regarding the establishment of the United States Space Force.