

## Why GAO Did This Study

As part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Protective Service (FPS) is responsible for protecting federal employees and visitors in approximately 9,000 federal facilities owned or leased by the General Services Administration (GSA). FPS has a budget of approximately \$1 billion and maintains approximately 1,200 full-time employees and about 13,000 contract security guards that help accomplish the agency's facility protection mission.

This testimony is based on past reports and testimonies and discusses challenges FPS faces in carrying out its mission with regard to (1) risk management, (2) strategic human capital planning, (3) oversight of its contract guard program, and (4) ensuring that its fee-based funding structure is the appropriate mechanism for funding the agency. GAO also addresses the extent to which FPS has made progress in responding to these challenges. To perform this work, GAO used its key facility protection practices as criteria, visited FPS regions and selected GSA buildings, reviewed training and certification data for FPS's contract guards, and interviewed officials from DHS, GSA, guard contractors, and guards.

## What GAO Recommends

DHS and FPS have generally concurred with GAO's past recommendations. DHS and FPS have initiatives in process, for example, to address risk management, strategic human capital planning, and oversight of its contract guard program.

## HOMELAND SECURITY

### Protecting Federal Facilities Remains a Challenge for the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Protective Service

## What GAO Found

FPS continues to face challenges in carrying out its mission. Specifically:

- *The absence of a risk management program hampers FPS's ability to protect federal facilities.* For many years, GAO has advocated the importance of a risk management approach. GAO reported in August 2010 that FPS does not use a comprehensive risk management approach that links threats and vulnerabilities to resource requirements. Instead, FPS uses a facility-by-facility approach which assumes that facilities with the same security level have the same risk regardless of their location. Without a risk management approach that identifies threats and vulnerabilities and the resources required to achieve FPS's security goals, as GAO has recommended, there is limited assurance that programs will be prioritized and resources will be allocated to address existing and potential security threats in an efficient and effective manner.
- *FPS has not fully addressed several key human capital issues.* FPS continues to operate without a strategic human capital plan to guide its current and future workforce planning efforts, as GAO recommended in 2009. Further, FPS is not able to determine what its optimal staffing levels should be because FPS headquarters does not collect data on its workforce's knowledge, skills, and abilities. FPS has yet to fully ensure that its recent move to an inspector-based workforce does not hinder its ability to protect federal facilities.
- *FPS faces longstanding challenges in managing its contract guard workforce.* Weaknesses in FPS's contract guard program hamper its ability to protect federal facilities. GAO reported in 2009 and 2010 that FPS cannot ensure that its contract guards have required training and certifications. FPS is in the process of addressing GAO recommendations. For example, FPS revised its x-ray and magnetometer training for its inspectors and guards.
- *FPS has not reviewed its fee design or determined an appropriate funding mechanism.* FPS increased its basic security fee four times in 6 years to try to cover costs, but has not reviewed its fees to develop an informed, deliberate design. FPS's current fee structure has consistently resulted in total collection amounts less than agency costs and continues to be a topic of congressional interest and inquiry. FPS has yet to evaluate whether its fee-based structure or an alternative funding mechanism is most appropriate for funding the agency, as GAO recommended in 2008 and 2011.

FPS has made some progress in improving its ability to protect federal facilities. For example, in response to GAO recommendations, FPS is developing the Risk Assessment and Management Program (RAMP), which could enhance its ability to comprehensively assess risk at federal facilities and improve oversight of its contract guard program. DHS and FPS have initiatives in process to address 21 of the 28 recommendations GAO has made related to the challenges above, although none are yet fully implemented. According to FPS officials, this is in part because of changes in the agency's leadership, organization, funding, staffing levels, and delays in developing several new management systems, such as RAMP.