

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request

Highlights of [GAO-13-617T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate.

Background

GAO's mission is to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. GAO provides nonpartisan, objective, and reliable information to the Congress, federal agencies, and to the public and recommends improvements, when appropriate, across the full breadth and scope of the federal government's responsibilities.

In FY 2012, GAO provided hundreds of reports to 95 percent of the standing committees of the Congress and about 60 percent of their subcommittees. Additionally, senior GAO officials testified at 159 hearings on national and international issues.

GAO remains one of the best investments in the federal government, and GAO's dedicated staff continues to deliver high quality results. Since FY 2002, GAO's work has resulted in:

- over ½ trillion dollars in financial benefits; and
- 14,083 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public services, and promote sound management throughout government.

In FY 2012 alone, GAO's work yielded \$55.8 billion in financial benefits—a return of \$105 for every dollar invested in GAO.

Following three years of curtailed hiring, by the end of FY 2013 GAO's staffing level will decline by nearly 14 percent to levels not seen since 1935. GAO is requesting a budget of \$505.4 million to bolster its staff capacity and retain its highly skilled workforce.

View [GAO-13-617T](#). For more information, contact Gene L. Dodaro at (202) 512-5500 or dodarog@gao.gov.

In February, GAO submitted its fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget request for a modest increase of 1.9 percent to bolster its staff capacity and retain its highly skilled workforce. Consistent with guidance from the appropriations committees and OMB, the FY 2014 request was based on the annualized level of the initial continuing resolution (CR) which provided a slight increase over FY 2012 in FY 2013. Since that time, several actions have significantly reduced GAO's FY 2013 appropriation from \$511.3 million in FY 2012 to \$479.5 million in FY 2013, including 1) a reduction of \$5 million imposed in the final CR resulting in an enacted level of \$506.3 million, and 2) the \$25.7 million sequester and \$1 million rescission required by the Budget Control Act—a total reduction of \$31.7 million or 6.2 percent below FY 2012.

GAO appreciates the flexibility Congress provided in the final CR to help partially offset these reductions by increasing GAO's authority to spend collections and use prior year available balances to cover mandatory workers' compensation costs. However, these reductions to GAO's FY 2013 resources required that GAO take a number of actions to curtail spending plans, including reducing planned hiring by nearly sixty percent—dropping GAO's staffing level by over 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to 2,884 FTEs. FY 2013 represents the 3rd consecutive year of reductions in GAO's staffing level.

GAO has also updated its FY 2014 requirements to reflect reduced FY 2013 resources, hiring and spending. GAO's FY 2014 revised requirements of \$505.4 million are 0.2 percent below the FY 2013 CR-enacted level and 5.4 percent over the FY 2013 post-sequester/post-rescission funding level. Consistent with guidance, GAO's estimates assume the across-the-board pay increase (ATB) is 1.8 percent. However, if Congress chooses the ATB of 1 percent recently recommended by the President, it would further reduce GAO's requirements to \$502.5 million—an increase of 4.8 percent over the FY 2013 post-sequester/post-rescission funding level.

GAO's FY 2014 estimate supports a staffing level of 2,945 FTEs and will allow GAO to reinvigorate its hiring and retention programs to address succession planning and critical skill gaps and bolster GAO's overall staff capacity. Since FY 2010, GAO has dramatically reduced its staffing level and operating costs in response to budget constraints. By the end of FY 2013, GAO's staffing level will have dropped by 463 FTE or nearly 14 percent—a level not seen since 1935. In addition, in order to sustain quality operations throughout this period of budget constraints, GAO has already significantly reduced spending, reorganized its administrative support structure, improved business practices, leveraged technology to enhance the overall efficiency of its operations, and made significant reductions in its engagement support and infrastructure programs.

This significant reduction in GAO's staffing level severely jeopardizes its ability to adequately support the Congress in a timely manner, now and in the future. It is imperative that GAO rebuild its staff capacity to a level that will enable it to optimize the benefits GAO yields for the Congress and the nation going forward. Given the size of the federal budget and the multi-year actions needed to address the seriousness of the government's fiscal condition, investing resources to restore some of GAO's staff capacity would be a prudent and wise investment that will produce positive outcomes for the Congress and our country. For example, since 2002 GAO's work has resulted in over ½ trillion dollars in financial benefits and over 14 thousand other benefits for the American people.