# REQUESTS TO GAO: PROCESS AND TIMING

**Making a Request**

**Send a request letter** via e-mail to our Congressional Relations office. Requests from the chair or ranking member of a committee or subcommittee have priority. The topic should fall within the jurisdiction of their committee or subcommittee.

Our Congressional Relations office will let you know we have **received your letter**.

If we **accept your request**, we will e-mail a letter telling you who you can contact and when we expect to start work.

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**Initiating the Audit**

**GAO assembles the team** and initiates the work. The timing of initiation depends on staff availability.

We will **contact you** within 20 days of initiating your job for additional information.

We will tell you when we think we can deliver a finished product, but the issuance date isn’t set until after agency review.

**This schedule** is based on many factors, including the scope of the questions being asked.

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**Designing the Audit**

The team meets with GAO experts, stakeholders, and management to **design an audit method**—one that is fact-based and can support our findings and potential recommendations.

After the team has **committed** to an audit method, we will contact you to explain how we plan to answer your request.

This process typically takes about 3 months.

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**Providing Briefings**

You can **ask for a briefing** on the status of our work or for preliminary findings at any point during our audit.

The only information about your request that we will share with others are the **questions, scope, and methodology** of the audit.

If there is work we are doing that is of interest to you, you may ask to **become a co-requester**. Check Watchdog for ongoing work.

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**Agency Review**

We will send our draft report to the **agencies we audited** for comment. At this time, you will also receive an informational copy.

Agencies get up to a month to **review and respond** to our findings and recommendations.

Agency review and **comments** do not affect the independence of our review or the report we release (although we may make technical corrections).

We will publish written agency comments, if provided, in an appendix to the report.

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**Issuing the Report**

We typically issue the report **about 14 days** after receiving agency comments.

We will contact you to confirm this date.

When a report is issued, the original requester(s) (but not co-requesters) can **restrict public release** of the report for up to 30 days.

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**To find your request on**

**HouseNet (House):**
- hover over “Legislative” mega menu
- click on Congressional Websites
- scroll down to GAO Watchdog

**Webster (Senate):**
- under the Legislative Branch Sites links
- click Government Accountability Office (Congressional Site)