What GAO Found

Roughly $35 million was obligated under 56 Arlington contracts and task orders valued over $100,000 and active during fiscal years 2010 and 2011. These contracts supported cemetery operations, construction and facility maintenance, and new efforts to enhance information technology systems for the automation of burial operations. ANCP does not award its own contracts, but instead obtains contracting support in two different ways. Thirty-five contracts in GAO’s review were awarded by three contracting organizations that directly supported ANCP. For the remaining 21 contracts and task orders, ANCP partnered with other Army organizations with expertise in areas such as information technology and construction. Those organizations, in turn, used contracting offices to support Arlington needs. Many of the contracts GAO reviewed have now ended, while those still ongoing may continue through fiscal years 2012-2014, depending on ANCP needs. While ANCP has taken steps to improve visibility of contracts and financial management capabilities more broadly, it does not currently maintain complete data to identify and track contracts supporting its operations. Without such data, ANCP may continue to face difficulties in ensuring the effective management and oversight of its contracts and related funding.

ANCP has taken numerous actions to correct identified contracting deficiencies and improve contract management at multiple levels, including coordination with other Army organizations for special assistance and manpower. ANCP signed new agreements with the Army Contracting Command and the Army Corps of Engineers that identify broad responsibilities between these organizations for providing contract support. However, similar agreements in place with other organizations, such as the Army Information Technology Agency and the Army Analytics Group, do not specifically address contract management roles and responsibilities in support of Arlington’s information technology efforts. Although these responsibilities are generally understood by officials at present, they may be less clearly understood in the future when personnel have changed. ANCP has also taken steps to improve internal guidance for contract management and staff training, although these efforts are ongoing. Likewise, ANCP has increased dedicated acquisition staff support for its contracting efforts, but has not yet fully determined the appropriate number, skill levels, and arrangements necessary to meet its contracting needs. Newer contracts supporting Arlington show improvement in the use of sound acquisition practices, with steps taken to consolidate requirements and better document acquisition planning, award, and oversight activities. The success of ANCP’s acquisition outcomes will depend on continued management focus from ANCP and its contracting partners to leverage their expertise while mitigating associated risks.

While the Army has made significant progress, further actions are necessary to ensure sustained attention to contract management, and institutionalize progress made to date, particularly as the current spotlight fades.