United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 31, 2012

Congressional Addressees

Subject: *Managing for Results: GAO's Work Related to the Interim Crosscutting Priority Goals under the GPRA Modernization Act*

Many of the meaningful results that the federal government seeks to achieve—such as those related to protecting food and agriculture, providing homeland security, and ensuring a well-trained and educated workforce—require the coordinated efforts of more than one federal agency and often more than one sector and level of government. Both Congress and the executive branch have recognized the need for improved collaboration across the federal government. Accordingly, in January 2011 the almost two-decades-old Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) was updated with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA or the act).[1] The act establishes a new framework aimed at taking a more crosscutting and integrated approach to focusing on results and improving government performance. Effective implementation of the act could play an important role in clarifying desired outcomes, addressing program performance that spans multiple organizations, and facilitating future actions to reduce unnecessary duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.[2] Among other things, the act requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to coordinate with agencies to establish outcome-oriented federal government priority goals—otherwise referred to as crosscutting goals—covering a limited number of policy areas as well as goals to improve management across the federal government.[3] It also requires that OMB—with the agencies—develop a federal government performance plan that defines the level of performance to be achieved toward the crosscutting goals.[4]

This report is part of our mandate that we assess implementation of the act.[5] Our specific objective for this report was to comment on the federal government's interim crosscutting priority goals provided in the President's 2013 budget submission based on our prior work—and selected ongoing work—and identify our relevant open recommendations and matters for congressional consideration. To accomplish this

[1] Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (2011). GPRAMA amends the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285 (1993).
[2] *GAO, 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap, Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue,* GAO-12-342SP (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012).
[3] 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(1).
[4] 31 U.S.C. § 1115(a).
[5] GPRAMA, § 15(b)(1).

objective, we reviewed information that was included in the President's 2013 budget submission and the federal government's performance plan, which was released concurrently with the budget on the website www.goals.performance.gov. We then reviewed the work that we have conducted over a number of years related to each of the goals. We also updated the status of key open recommendations related to each of the goals with the appropriate agencies.

We conducted our performance audit from March 2012 to May 2012 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives

Development of Crosscutting Priority Goals and the Federal Government's Performance Plan

The act requires that OMB develop federal government priority goals (crosscutting goals) and a federal government performance plan, which is to be updated annually and released concurrently with the President's budget.[6] Specifically, it requires OMB, starting with the 2015 budget and in coordination with agencies and in consultation with the Congress, to develop—every 4 years—long-term, outcome-oriented goals for a limited number of crosscutting policy areas and goals for management improvement areas, including: financial management; human capital management; information technology management; procurement and acquisition management; and real property management. The goals are to be updated or revised every 4 years. In addition, OMB is required to develop interim priority goals, starting with the 2013 budget.[7] OMB is also required to provide information on how these federal government priority goals will be achieved in a federal government performance plan.

The President's 2013 budget submission includes the federal government's 14 interim crosscutting priority goals. Of these goals, 9 are related to crosscutting policy areas, and 5 are management improvement goals. These goals cover the following areas

- science, technology, engineering, and math education;
- veteran career readiness;
- broadband;
- entrepreneurship and small businesses;
- energy efficiency;
- exports;

[6] 31 U.S.C. §§ 1115(a), 1120(a).

[7] GPRAMA, § 14(a)(1). As the Congressional Research Service explains, the act aligns the timing for many of its products with submission of the President's budget proposal. Initially, the law requires the President, OMB, and agencies to produce several products to accompany the President's fiscal year 2013 budget proposal. The act provides that a one-year transition from the requirements of GPRA takes place. Consequently, the law characterizes some of these goals and plans as "interim" or "adjusted."

- job training;
- cybersecurity;
- sustainability;
- financial management—improper payments;
- human capital management—critical skills gaps;
- information technology management—data center consolidation;
- procurement and acquisition management—strategic sourcing; and
- real property management.

As required by the act, OMB has identified a goal leader for each of the crosscutting priority goals in the federal government performance plan. These goal leaders are responsible for coordinating efforts to achieve each of the goals.

Our prior work provides insights into federal agencies' efforts related to the 14 interim crosscutting priority goals. We have provided this information in the attached enclosures 1–14.

GAO's Work Identifies Additional Departments, Agencies, and Programs Related to the Interim Goals

The act also requires that the federal government performance plan include the agencies, organizations, program activities, regulations, tax expenditures, policies, and other activities contributing to each crosscutting priority goal. Accordingly, the performance plan includes this information for each of the interim goals. The performance plan notes that additional programs with the potential to contribute to each of the goals may be identified over time. In that regard, our prior work has identified additional relevant departments, agencies and programs for 10 of the 14 interim goals. For example, we have previously reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is one of the primary federal entities that has helped to plan a nationwide public safety broadband network, by among other things, conducting forums, coordinating federal efforts on broadband implementation, and writing educational materials about the broadband network. However, DHS is not listed as a responsible department under the broadband priority goal in the federal government performance plan.

A detailed discussion of additional relevant departments, agencies and programs for each priority goal based on our work is included in the attached enclosures.

Conclusions

The President's 2013 budget submission includes the first interim crosscutting priority goals. The establishment of these goals marks an important opportunity for addressing some of the key crosscutting program and management challenges facing the federal government. Accordingly, if the federal government does not leverage all relevant parties, important opportunities for achieving these goals may be missed.

Recommendation for Executive Action

We recommend that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in considering additional programs with the potential to contribute to the crosscutting goals, review the additional departments, agencies, and programs that we have identified, and consider including them in the federal government's performance plan, as appropriate.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report for review and comment to the Acting Director of OMB. OMB staff agreed with our recommendation that OMB will review the additional departments, agencies, and programs that we have identified in our work, and determine if they are relevant to achieving the crosscutting goals. In a May 23, 2012, e-mail, OMB staff commented that they appreciated the information provided by the report for consideration during the implementation-planning process. Further—as we acknowledge in our report—they noted that the initial lists of contributing agencies/programs published on performance.gov were not meant to be comprehensive of all programs with any contribution to the crosscutting goal, but as an initial identification of the key programs that will contribute toward goal achievement. For example, OMB staff noted that for the entrepreneurship and small business goal, the performance plan focused on those agencies that they feel have the most direct impact on entrepreneurship. They also noted that they believe that the goal process will be successful if it focuses strategically in the first instance, with a goal of comprehensiveness over time. In the case of the job-training goal, OMB noted that the current list on performance.gov is not yet comprehensive. In other cases, it highlighted some instances where additional agencies—beyond those already listed on performance.gov—will be included in efforts related to the federal government's priority goals. For example, OMB notes that the efforts of all agencies will be coordinated through the 5-year STEM education strategic plan that the Office of Science and Technology Policy is developing through the National Science and Technology Council. The agency also notes that the additional agencies that we list as being relevant for the veteran career readiness goal have representation on task forces and interagency groups that will be responsible for the goal.

OMB officials further explained that the current implementation planning phase of the crosscutting goal process is being used to refine the identification of which programs will be key to goal achievement, what the nature of that contribution will look like, and how it will be measured. As we acknowledge in our report, the officials explained that they expect that the published lists on performance.gov may change as new information comes to light in the implementation planning. Moreover, they noted that it is important to point out that determinations regarding which programs to include in the initial lists were the result of a collaborative, interagency process that was led by the goal leaders with coordination from the Performance Improvement Council, which consists of more than two dozen federal agencies. We view this collaborative process to be a positive development.

OMB staff also provided technical comments, which we have included as appropriate.

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We are sending copies of this report to the Acting Director of OMB as well as interested congressional committees and other interested parties. The report will also be available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov. This report was prepared under the coordination of J. Christopher Mihm, Managing Director, Strategic Issues, who may be reached at (202) 512-6806, or mihmj@gao.gov. Specific questions about individual issues may be directed to the area contact listed at the end of each enclosure. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report.

J. Christopher Mihm
Managing Director, Strategic Issues

List of Addressees

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
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The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
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The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
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The Honorable Kent Conrad
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The Honorable Jeff Sessions
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The Honorable Mark R. Warner, Chairman, Task Force on Government Performance, United States Senate

The Honorable Paul Ryan
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The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget, United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, United States House of Representatives

Enclosure 1:
<u>Crosscutting Policy Goal: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education</u>

Goal Statement: In support of the President's goal that the U.S. have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020, the federal government will work with education partners to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education at all levels to help increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third over the next 10 years, resulting in an additional 1 million graduates with degrees in STEM subjects.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Department of Education:

- Mathematics and Science Partnerships Program/Effective Teaching and Learning for a Complete Education;
- Investing in Innovation Fund;
- Improving Teacher Quality State Grants/Effective Teacher and Leader State Grants; and
- Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions STEM and articulation programs.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration:

- National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program;
- Minority University Research Education Program; and
- Formal and Informal Education.

National Science Foundation:

- Transforming Undergrad Education in STEM;
- Widening Implementation and Demonstration of Evidence-Based Reforms;
- Math and Science Partnership Program;
- Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program;
- Graduate Research Fellowships Program;
- Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program;
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Undergraduate Program; and
- Informal Science Education.

Department of Health and Human Services—National Institutes of Health (NIH):

- NIH Undergraduate Research Experiences to Support Science Learning.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce: • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and • National Institute of Standards and Technology. Department of Defense; Department of Energy; Department of Health and Human Services: • Health Resources and Services Administration. Department of Homeland Security; Department of the Interior; Department of Transportation; and Environmental Protection Agency.

GAO Comments

Research shows that the United States (U.S.) lacks a strong pipeline of future workers in STEM fields and that U.S. students continue to lag behind students in other highly technological nations in mathematics and science achievement. The administration's goal to improve the quality of STEM education and increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third over the next 10 years aims to address these shortcomings. The federal government invests billions of dollars annually through more than 200 STEM Education programs. While these programs are not necessarily duplicative, our work shows that poor coordination among the many agencies that oversee these programs and the lack of a governmentwide strategic plan have hampered the effectiveness of the federal effort.

In naming STEM education as a crosscutting goal, the administration is taking the first step towards creating a governmentwide plan to achieve its goal. However, a number of limitations could hamper progress.

- There were 13 federal agencies that administered 209 STEM education programs in fiscal year 2010. Most of these programs overlap with each other to some degree in that they share the same objectives, serve the same target groups, and provide the same services. The administration said it will release a 5-year strategic plan this spring that will improve the coordination and efficiency of these programs, but the specifics of this plan have not yet been released.
- Nine of the agencies did not connect STEM education activities to agency goals in their annual performance plans while 11 did not measure and report on the

progress of STEM education activities in their annual performance plans. This may hinder decision makers' ability to assess how these STEM education programs contribute to the overall federal effort. When the administration releases its 5-year strategic plan, it plans to identify specific roles and responsibilities for each agency and develop implementation timelines with annual actions and milestones to create a road map for agency implementation efforts, track progress towards the 5-year strategic plan goals, and report on the impact of STEM education programs.

- Little is known about the effectiveness and performance of STEM education programs because the majority of them have not been evaluated in the last 5 years. Moreover, when an evaluation was conducted of a program the results were not always shared in a way that facilitated knowledge sharing and, according to National Science and Technology Council officials, most agencies do not share or disseminate evaluations in a way that could be useful for coordination. Program officials reported that the most common means of dissemination of their results were through their websites or at conferences or forums, which, according to a 2006 National Science and Technology Council report, were methods that require practitioners to actively seek out results, so such methods may prevent the results of the research from being conveyed to them. However, these mechanisms have limits. To address these deficiencies, the administration's strategic plan is to include common metrics, criteria to measure success, and a strategy to disseminate evidence-based practices.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

In 2012, we reviewed STEM education programs and made four recommendations (see section below for a list of reports). Our first recommendation was that in order to ensure the federal government strategically invests limited funds in an efficient and effective manner that achieves the greatest impact in developing a pipeline of future workers in STEM fields, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) should direct the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) to work with agencies, through its strategic-planning process to identify programs that might be candidates for consolidation or elimination. Specifically, this step could be achieved through an analysis that includes information on program overlap, similar to the analysis we conducted, and information on program effectiveness. As part of this effort, OSTP should work with agency officials to identify and report any changes in statutory authority necessary to execute each specific program consolidation identified by NSTC's strategic plan.

Second, we recommended that in order to ensure NSTC's strategic-planning process enhances the federal government's ability to assess what works and that the process for identifying potential program consolidation includes information on program effectiveness, the Director of OSTP should direct NSTC to develop guidance to help agencies determine the types of evaluations that may be feasible and appropriate for different types of STEM education programs and develop a mechanism for sharing this information across agencies. This step could include guidance and sharing of information that outlines practices for evaluating similar types of programs.

Third, we recommended that in order to ensure agencies' efforts are better aligned to governmentwide STEM education goals and that federal resources are concentrated on advancing those goals, the Director of OSTP should direct NSTC to develop guidance for how agencies can better incorporate each agency's STEM education efforts and the goals from NSTC's 5-year STEM education strategic plan into each agency's own performance plans and reports.

Fourth, we recommended that in order to improve transparency and strengthen accountability of NSTC's strategic planning and coordination efforts, the Director of OSTP should direct NSTC to develop a framework for how agencies will be monitored to ensure that they are collecting and reporting on NSTC strategic plan goals. This framework should include alternatives for a sustained focus on monitoring coordination of STEM programs if the NSTC Committee on STEM terminates in 2015 as called for in its charter.

OMB stated that our four recommendations above are critical to improving the provision of STEM education across the federal government. OSTP stated that it will address our recommendations in the NSTC 5-year Federal STEM Education Strategic Plan, which will be released in spring 2012.

Selected Reports

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Strategic Planning Needed to Better Manage Overlapping Programs across Multiple Agencies. GAO-12-108. Washington, D.C.: January 20, 2012.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Survey of Federal Programs. GAO-12-110SP. Washington, D.C.: January 20, 2012.

Higher Education: Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Programs and Related Trends. GAO-06-114. Washington, D.C.: October 12, 2005.

GAO Contact

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Enclosure 2
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Veteran Career Readiness

Goal Statement: Improve career readiness of veterans. By September 30, 2013, increase the percent of eligible service members who will be served by career readiness and preparedness programs from 50 percent to 90 percent in order to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

A Department of Defense - Department of Veterans Affairs Task Force that includes representation from Department of Labor, Department of Defense (to include representatives of the military services), Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Education, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Personnel Management, will lead this goal, guided by White House leadership.

Contributing Programs:

Department of Labor:

- Transition Assistance Program;
- Veterans Gold Card; and
- One Stop Career Centers.

Department of Veterans Affairs:

- Vet Success on Campus;
- Montgomery GI Bill/Post-9/11 GI Bill Education programs;
- Vocation Rehabilitation & Employment;
- Veterans Jobs Corp; and
- VA for Vets.

Department of Defense:

- Transition Assistance Program;
- Disabled Transition Assistance Program;
- Transition Boot Camp; and
- Career Decision Toolkit.

Department of Education:

- Veterans Upward Bound Program

Department of Commerce:

- Veterans Employment Office

Small Business Administration:

- Vet Entrepreneurship Boot Camp.

Tax Expenditures:

- Returning Heroes Tax Credit; and
- Wounded Warrior Tax Credit.

Other:

- Joining Forces Campaign;
- National Resource Directory;
- Veterans Jobs Bank; and
- Community Health Centers to hire 8,000 veterans.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

United States Department of Labor:

- Disabled Veterans Outreach Program;
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program;
- Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program; and
- Veterans' Workforce Investment Program.

The Joint Department of Labor and Department of Veterans Affairs Work Group.

GAO Comments

For over 20 years, we have periodically reported on individual employment and training programs and specific populations of veterans who use them and made recommendations to improve program coordination and performance measurement. Because programs that target veterans may provide similar types of employment and training services, coordination across agencies and programs is critical. The Department of Labor (Labor) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have taken steps to address our past recommendations by completing and approving a plan to track the implementation of state-level memorandums of agreement. The Joint Labor and VA Work Group is charged with overseeing the plan. The goal for veteran career readiness may provide a mechanism to encourage collaboration across government. However, as noted above in the additional relevant programs section, there are other programs that can contribute to the goal beyond those already identified in the plan. We have ongoing work examining the extent to which federal veterans' employment and training programs coordinate services.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

Our September 2008 report examined the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program, which allows servicemembers to complete their VA disability benefits application while they are still in the military and provides access to VA personnel located at their base to assist them. Two of the report's recommendations focused more broadly on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which provides briefings on a variety of topics related to benefits and services available to servicemembers as they are discharged and begin life as veterans. We recommended that the Secretary of Defense should direct the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to establish (1) an accurate measure of service members' participation in TAP including VA benefit briefings and (2) a plan with specific time frames for meeting the goal of 85 percent participation rate in TAP. While the Department of Defense had taken some steps to review TAP participation and performance measures, a new law passed in November 2011, which made participation in the TAP program mandatory for all servicemembers, and made the recommendation for 85 percent participation unnecessary. We are working with the Department of Defense to determine how the agency will track TAP participation consistent with new legal requirements.

Selected Reports

Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information on Colocating Services and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies. GAO-11-92. Washington, D.C.: January 13, 2011.

VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment: Better Incentives, Workforce Planning, and Performance Reporting Could Improve Program. GAO-09-34. Washington, D.C.: January 26, 2009.

Veterans' Disability Benefits: Better Accountability and Access Would Improve the Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program. GAO-08-901. Washington, D.C.: September 9, 2008.

Disabled Veterans' Employment: Additional Planning, Monitoring, and Data Collection Efforts Would Improve Assistance. GAO-07-1020. Washington, D.C.: September 12, 2007.

Veterans' Employment and Training Service: Labor Could Improve Information on Reemployment Services, Outcomes, and Program Impact. GAO-07-594. Washington, D.C.: May 24, 2007.

GAO Contacts

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Enclosure 3
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Broadband

Goal Statement: As part of expanding all broadband capabilities, ensure 4G broadband coverage for 98 percent of Americans by 2016.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Department of Commerce:

- Broadband Technology Opportunities Program; and
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Federal Communications Commission:

- National Broadband Plan.

Department of Agriculture:

- Broadband Initiatives Program;
- Rural Broadband Loan Program;
- Community Connect Grants; and
- Rural Telecom Loan Program.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

Department of Homeland Security

GAO Comments

In 2010, we identified actions that stakeholders in other countries considered effective to increase broadband deployment and adoption—(1) instituting plans and policies, (2) providing funds through public/private partnerships, (3) increasing competition, (4) expanding online services, and (5) providing digital-literacy training or consumer subsidies or both. The federal government has taken several steps in this direction. In particular, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the *National Broadband Plan* with over 200 recommendations for FCC, other government agencies, and Congress; and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) provided $7.2 billion for the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce to expand broadband deployment and adoption.[8] However, we also noted that performance goals and measures, data, and oversight are important to ensure the success of these efforts. For example, we found that FCC does not collect data on aspects of competition in the wireless industry, and the Department of Agriculture lacks outcome-based performance

[8] Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115 (2009).

goals and measures for its Recovery Act broadband loan program. With respect to using funds from the Universal Service Fund (USF) for broadband deployment, we have reported long-standing weaknesses with FCC's management of USF, including that FCC has not undertaken a data-driven approach to overseeing USF or established performance goals and measures for USF programs. Furthermore, we previously reported that repurposing USF funds for broadband services could cause the size of the fund to greatly expand unless policymakers reexamine its purpose, design, and management, and the FCC improves its management and oversight processes to ensure the program's cost-effectiveness.

The goal of extending advanced 4G wireless coverage to 98 percent of Americans will rely on adequate radio frequency spectrum allocated for this purpose since spectrum is necessary to deliver wireless broadband to consumers. We have previously reported that the demand for spectrum is increasing as the U.S. experiences significant growth in commercial wireless broadband services. Currently, there are federal government initiatives under way aimed at identifying spectrum that can be made available to meet the nation's increased demand for commercial wireless broadband services. For example, in June 2010, the President issued a memorandum directing the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to begin identifying federal spectrum that can be made available for wireless broadband, and the *National Broadband Plan* recommended that 500 megahertz of spectrum be made newly available for broadband use within the next 10 years. However, as new spectrum-dependent technologies and services are brought to the market and new mission needs unfold among government users, concerns exist about the availability of additional spectrum for future needs. Furthermore, most of the usable spectrum in the U.S. has been allocated to existing uses, and changes that affect existing users can cause contentious stakeholder conflicts that cross the jurisdictions of the federal agencies that oversee the spectrum—FCC and the NTIA—and can lead to protracted negotiations.

The broadband priority goal notes that as part of the strategy to implement the goal, the administration is working to develop a fully functioning and interoperable public safety broadband network to ensure that the public safety needs are met and make excess network capacity available for commercial use when available. We have previously reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is one of the primary federal entities that have helped to plan a nationwide public safety broadband network by, among other things, conducting forums, coordinating federal efforts on broadband implementation, and writing educational materials about the broadband network.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

In 2009, we recommended that the Secretary of Agriculture establish quantifiable, outcome-based performance goals by which to measure the program effectiveness of its Broadband Initiatives Program, which was funded through the Recovery Act. According to agency officials, as of February 2012, the department has developed short-term performance metrics for the Broadband Initiatives Program and is working with the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service to explore longer-term economic and other impacts of the broadband infrastructure.

In 2010, we recommended that FCC assess whether expanding its original data collection of wireless industry inputs and outputs—such as prices, special access rates, capital expenditures, and equipment costs—would help it better satisfy its requirement to review competitive market conditions with respect to commercial mobile services. On June 29, 2010, FCC sought comments on additional data that it should collect to inform the commission's policy-making activities; but as of February 2012, FCC had not issued a report or adopted an order pertaining to this effort.

In 2010, we recommended that FCC conduct an assessment of the current telecommunications needs of rural health care providers and develop effective goals and performance measures linked to those goals for the USF Rural Health Care Program. As of February 2012, FCC had not released any orders or letters that address these recommendations.

Selected Reports

Emergency Communications: Various Challenges Likely to Slow Implementation of a Public Safety Broadband Network. GAO-12-343. Washington, D.C.: February 22, 2012.

Commercial Spectrum: Plans and Actions to Meet Future Needs, Including Continued Use of Auctions. GAO-12-118. Washington, D.C.: November 23, 2011.

Spectrum Management: NTIA Planning and Processes Need Strengthening to Promote the Efficient Use of Spectrum by Federal Agencies. GAO-11-352. Washington, D.C.: April 12, 2011.

Recovery Act: Further Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Oversight of Broadband Stimulus Programs. GAO-10-823. Washington, D.C.: August 4, 2010.

Telecommunications: Enhanced Data Collection Could Help FCC Better Monitor Competition In The Wireless Industry. GAO-10-779. Washington, D.C.: July 27, 2010.

Recovery Act: Agencies Are Addressing Broadband Program Challenges, But Actions Are Needed To Improve Implementation. GAO-10-80. Washington, D.C.: November 16, 2009.

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Enclosure 4
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses

Goal Statement: Increase federal services to entrepreneurs and small businesses with an emphasis on 1) startups and growing firms and 2) underserved markets.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Small Business Administration:

- Small Business Development Centers;
- Women's Business Development Centers;
- Small Business Lending Programs (7(a), 504, Microloans, Intermediary Lender);
- Small Business Investment Company; and
- Small Business Contracting Task Force.

Department of the Treasury:

- Community Development Financial Institutions;
- State Small Business Credit Initiative; and
- New Markets Tax Credit.

Department of Commerce:

- i6 Challenge; and
- Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge.

Department of Defense:

- Small Business Innovation Research; and
- Small Business Technology Transfer.

National Science Foundation:

- Innovation Corps; and
- Commercialization Plan.

Veterans Affairs:

- Center for Veterans Enterprise.

Department of Energy:

- America's Next Top Energy Innovator; and
- Innovative Ecosystems Initiative.

Department of Agriculture:

- Agriculture Lending Programs (B&I, microlending); and
- Agriculture Technology Innovation Partnership.

Department of Health and Human Services—National Institutes of Health:

- Startup Evaluation License Agreement Program.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

As part of our ongoing work to assess potential duplication, overlap, and fragmentation of economic development programs, we have identified the following additional programs that can assist entrepreneurs with access to financing, mentorship/counseling services, and government contracts/research grants at the four agencies included within the scope of our review. These programs typically can fund a variety of activities in addition to providing support to entrepreneurs.

Department of Agriculture:

- Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants;
- Value Added Producer Grants;
- Intermediary Re-lending;
- Rural Cooperative Development Grants;
- Empowerment Zones;
- Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program;
- Rural Business Enterprise Grants;
- Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program;
- Small Business Innovation Research; and
- Rural Business Opportunity Grants.

Department of Commerce:

- Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund;
- Grants for Public Works and Economic Development Facilities;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance;
- Minority Business Centers;
- Native American Business Enterprise Centers;
- Economic Adjustment Assistance;
- Economic Development/ Support for Planning Organizations; and

- Economic Development/ Technical Assistance.

Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD):

- Rural Innovation Fund;
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery Grants;
- Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities;
- Indian CDBG;
- CDBG/Brownfields Economic Development Initiative;
- CDBG/Non-entitlement CDBG Grants in Hawaii;
- CDBG/Section 108 Loan Guarantees;
- CDBG/ Special Purpose Insular Areas;
- CDBG/States;
- CDBG/Entitlement Grants;
- Section 4 Capacity Building for Affordable Housing and Community Development; and
- Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities.

Small Business Administration:

- 8(a) Business Development Program;
- 7(j) Technical Assistance;
- Procurement Assistance to Small Businesses;
- Service Corps of Retired Executives;
- Veterans' Business Outreach Centers;
- Program for Investment in Micro-Entrepreneurs;
- Historically Underutilized Business Zones; and
- Federal and State Technology Partnership Program.

GAO Comments

A wide range of federal agencies administer programs that provide assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Little, however, is known about the combined results of federal efforts to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses or the contributions of each individual program. In addition, the federal government performance plan does not establish targets for meeting this crosscutting goal. As part of our ongoing work on federal economic development programs, we identified 80 programs at four agencies—the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Department of

Commerce (Commerce), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as well as the Small Business Administration (SBA)—that can support various economic development activities, including 53 programs with missions related to supporting entrepreneurs. Among these 53 programs, we found evidence of overlap and fragmentation in programs that can provide support to entrepreneurs. For example, 36 programs across the four agencies provide technical assistance, including business training, counseling, as well as research and development support. Thirty-three programs across the four agencies support entrepreneurs through financial assistance in the form of grants and loans.

We found that most of the 53 economic development programs we identified that support entrepreneurs have performance measures that align with their missions and tend to meet their annual performance goals. However, we found that few evaluation studies have been completed, and little evaluative information exists to assess programs' effectiveness. Program evaluations are systematic ways to assess a broader range of information on program performance and can help identify that programs are effective or not, explain why goals were not met and identify strategies for meeting unmet goals, and estimate what would have occurred in the absence of the program. Congress and the agencies need meaningful performance information such as evaluation studies and performance measures to help decision makers identify ways to make more informed decisions about allocating increasingly scarce resources among programs, including tax expenditures.

To address issues arising from potential overlap and fragmentation in economic development programs, we previously identified collaborative practices agencies should consider implementing in order to maximize performance and results of federal programs that share common outcomes. Our work to date shows that three of the four agencies—Commerce, SBA, and USDA—have taken initial steps to implement at least one of the collaborative practices, defining and articulating common outcomes for some of their related programs. However, the four agencies have provided limited evidence that they have taken steps to develop compatible policies or procedures with other federal agencies or to search for opportunities to leverage physical and administrative resources with their federal partners.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

In a 2012 report, we identified the following actions we expect to recommend based on our ongoing work:

- Congress may wish to consider ways to tie funding more closely to a program's demonstrated effectiveness. One way to increase accountability and elevate the importance of program evaluation activities is to tie these factors to funding decisions. Therefore, Congress may want to consider requiring agencies to provide greater support for funding requests and requiring information on demonstrated results of program effectiveness.
- Commerce, HUD, SBA, and USDA should improve program evaluation and performance metrics. In order to identify options to better structure these programs

for the Congress to consider, these agencies should conduct program evaluations and collect data on performance measures.

- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and four agencies (Commerce, HUD, SBA, and USDA) should explore opportunities to restructure programs through means such as consolidation, elimination, and collaborative mechanisms, both within and across agencies. As OMB works with the agencies to identify programmatic areas that should be better coordinated and tracked, the agencies should look for ways to consolidate programs or opportunities for greater collaboration. In addition, to better ensure the most efficient and effective delivery method for federal assistance to entrepreneurs, SBA, Commerce, HUD, and USDA should individually and collectively explore options for restructuring programs that target particular types of businesses or communities and report the results of their efforts to the Congress.

The agencies did not fully agree with the needed actions above. For example, OMB stated that the Administration has taken a number of steps to increase coordination among economic and entrepreneurial development programs, provide better service to businesses seeking federal services, and improve performance evaluation. According to OMB, the new BusinessUSA website will help remedy many of the coordination and fragmentation issues identified in our report. The website is intended to provide a virtual one-stop shop for small businesses and enable them to access the wide array of federal programs and services available to them across the government regardless of where they are located. As we continue work in this area, we plan to further monitor and assess OMB's efforts to work with Commerce, HUD, USDA, and SBA to increase coordination among economic development programs, provide better service to businesses under the programs, and improve program evaluation.

Commerce also stated the report did not recognize the significant advances that Commerce's Economic Development Agency has made to improve program evaluation with the development of a performance management improvement logic model. We recognize the action that the Economic Development Agency has taken to develop its new performance management model. However, because the Economic Development Agency has not completely designed its new model or provided sufficient information to explain how results of program evaluations will be included in the model, this action did not change our findings. As we continue work in this area, we plan to further monitor and assess the efforts Commerce, HUD, SBA, and USDA undertake to improve program evaluation and performance metrics.

Selected Reports

Efficiency and Effectiveness of Fragmented Economic Development Programs Are Unclear. GAO-11-477R. Washington, D.C.: May 19, 2011.

Revitalization Programs: Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Renewal Communities. GAO-10-464R. Washington, D.C.: March 12, 2010.

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Small Business Administration: Additional Actions Are Needed to Certify and Monitor HUBZone Businesses and Assess Program Results. GAO-08-643. Washington, D.C.: June 17, 2008.

Small Business Administration: Additional Measures Needed to Assess 7(a) Loan Program's Performance. GAO-07-769. Washington, D.C.: July 13, 2007.

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Enclosure 5
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Energy Efficiency

Goal Statement: Reduce Energy Intensity (energy demand/$ real GDP) 50 percent by 2035 (2010 as base year).

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Environmental Protection Agency:

- Greenhouse Gas Standards for light-duty vehicles and medium- and heavy-duty trucks; and
- ENERGY STAR Program.

Department of Transportation:

- Fuel Economy Standards for light-duty vehicles and medium- and heavy-duty trucks.

Department of Energy:

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, including:
    - Vehicle Technologies Program;
    - Better Buildings, Better Plants Initiative;
    - Building Technologies Program;
    - Advanced Manufacturing Office;
    - Weatherization Assistance Program and Intergovernmental Activities;
    - Appliances and Commercial Equipment Standards;
    - Federal Energy Management Program; and
    - ARPA-E.

Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities.

Tax Expenditures:

- Expensing of exploration and development costs, fuels;
- Excess of percentage over cost depletion, fuels;
- Exception from passive loss limitation for working interests in oil and gas properties;
- Capital gains treatment of royalties on coal;
- Exclusion of interest on energy facility bonds;

- Energy production credit;
- Energy investment credit;
- Tax credit and deduction for clean-fuel burning vehicles;
- Exclusion of utility conservation subsidies;
- Allowance of deduction for certain energy efficient commercial building property;
- Credit for construction of new energy efficient homes;
- Credit for energy efficiency improvements to existing homes;
- Credit for energy efficient appliances;
- Credit for residential energy efficient property;
- Qualified energy conservation bonds; and,
- Advanced Energy Property Credit.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for this Goal Based on GAO Work

In our 2012 report, we identified an additional 6 federal agencies that implemented initiatives that foster green building in non-federal buildings, namely:

- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Commerce;
- Department of Defense;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Health and Human Services; and
- Small Businesses Administration.

GAO Comments

Federal energy efficiency programs include the efforts of multiple federal agencies that play a key role in national energy conservation; among other things, the agencies establish national standards and incentives for efficiency, provide energy consumption information for some products, sponsor energy efficiency research and development, and establish energy savings goals for its own operations. In prior reports, we identified challenges among agencies collaborating to achieve energy efficiency goals. For example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have worked to propose corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards and greenhouse gas (GHG) standards for passenger cars and light trucks that are generally aligned so manufacturers can build a single fleet of vehicles to comply with both standards for model years 2012 to 2016. NHTSA and EPA are collaborating by sharing resources and expertise to jointly set these standards.

However, this collaboration is not formally required, and the agencies are not documenting the processes used. Additionally, EPA and the Department of Energy (DOE) have made considerable progress in their ongoing efforts to implement significant changes to the Energy Star program, which includes the goal of reducing GHG emissions and energy consumption, as agreed to in a 2009 memorandum of understanding. However, we found that Energy Star does not have an independent administrative review process where adverse agency decisions can be reviewed, and there was a lack of transparency in EPA's key decisions.

DOE has also taken steps to address a variety of strategies to achieve energy efficiency goals. For example, a long-term goal of the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps low income families by making long-term energy efficiency improvements to their homes, is to increase energy efficiency through cost-effective weatherization work. According to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's (ORNL) March 2010 preliminary estimates, every $1 spent on the weatherization program for 2009 through 2011 would result in $1.80 in energy savings over the useful life of the investment, and an additional $0.70 for every dollar spent on the program for nonenergy generates benefits, such as reduced emissions of carbon dioxide resulting from lower residential fuel and electricity consumption. ORNL plans to issue more definitive estimates in 2013, and DOE officials stated that the results of this 2013 study will be used to strengthen current protocols for determining the most cost-effective weatherization work. Additionally, DOE is required to issue rules that set minimum energy efficiency standards for most consumer product categories—such as refrigerators, dishwashers, furnaces, and hot water heaters—by mandated deadlines in order to eliminate the least efficient products from the market. However, we found in January 2007 that DOE had missed all of the deadlines for rulemaking that had come due, a delay that was estimated to cost at least $28 billion in forgone energy savings by 2030. In our report, we recommended that DOE make improvements to its management practices in order to increase the likelihood that its plan for updating minimum energy efficiency standards would be successfully implemented. Those recommendations have been implemented, and we found that DOE has made significant progress toward updating the standards that we reported as backlogged. For example, from 2007 to 2011, DOE doubled the program staff and increased its budget for contractor support from $10 million/year to $35 million and, in 2010, hired a new program manager to improve program management and operations.

In prior reports, we have also found challenges in measuring progress toward energy efficiency goals. For example, DOE has taken several steps to implement the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) loan program. The ATVM program was authorized to provide loans to support projects to produce more fuel-efficient passenger vehicles and components, among other things. The program set three goals: increase the fuel economy of U.S. passenger vehicles as a whole, advance U.S. automotive technology, and protect taxpayers' financial interests. However, DOE has not developed sufficient performance measures that would enable it to fully assess the extent to which it has achieved its three program goals. In addition, we found that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which administers, and DOE, which assists in administering the EnergyGuide program requiring energy consumption labels on certain household products, had not: (1) updated the products required to carry the EnergyGuide label, (2) conducted inspections to ensure that the EnergyGuide label was present and available for consumers considering purchases, and (3) estimated the costs and energy savings of the program.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in 2010 that NHTSA should identify opportunities to evaluate the accuracy of key estimates, such as technology costs, used to determine the model year 2008 through 2011 light truck standards. As EPA has experience conducting retrospective analyses of regulatory programs, NHTSA should consider involving EPA in this process. We also recommended that NHTSA and EPA should document the process used in this joint rule making to establish a road map for any future rule making efforts and facilitate future collaboration. In addition, NHTSA and EPA should publish this documentation in order to increase transparency. Officials from the Department of Transportation—which houses NHTSA— and EPA generally agreed with the recommendation, but as of April 2012, the recommendations remain open as work is not yet complete.

We also recommended in 2010 that DOE revisit the various methodologies used in determining the weatherization work that should be performed based on the consideration of cost-effectiveness and develop standard methodologies that ensure that priority is given to the most cost-effective weatherization work. To validate any methodologies created, this effort should include the development of standards for accurately measuring the long-term energy savings resulting from weatherization work conducted. DOE officials generally agreed with the recommendation and, as of April 2012, in response to our recommendation, have begun to take actions to address it.

We also recommended in 2011 that to ensure decisions of the Energy Star program are fair and transparent, the Administrator of EPA should assess the need to develop a process for independent review of adverse agency decisions for the Energy Star program as it relates to setting specifications and disqualifications. If the Administrator of EPA determines that there is a need for an independent review process but that the agency has insufficient legal authority to undertake one, it should seek additional authority from Congress. EPA officials neither agreed nor disagreed with the recommendation and stated that close attention will continue to be paid to ensuring transparency in the program's operation and careful consideration of stakeholder input and interest.

Additionally, we recommended in 2011 that to help ensure the effectiveness and accountability of the ATVM program, the Secretary of Energy should direct the ATVM Program Office to develop sufficient and quantifiable performance measures for its three goals. DOE disagreed with this recommendation and has not yet implemented such performance measures. While DOE rightly established goals for the ATVM program we still believe the performance measures are insufficient and DOE is unable to assess its progress in accomplishing the program's goals. DOE's failure to develop and use appropriate performance measures means that Congress lacks important information on whether the funds spent so far are furthering the program's goals and, consequently, whether the program warrants continued support.

We made several recommendations in 2007 to FTC and DOE regarding the EnergyGuide program, including that it regularly review product categories not currently covered to assess whether they should be added, regularly measure the costs and energy savings of the EnergyGuide program, and conduct periodic inspections of retail environments (including the web) to ensure that the EnergyGuide labels are available to consumers. As of April 2012, FTC took steps to require that televisions carry the EnergyGuide label and has conducted inspections of retail environments and identified instances of noncompliance and taken enforcement action. FTC does review the costs of the EnergyGuide program, but has not measured the overall effectiveness of the program as GAO recommended. In addition, DOE has not evaluated the energy savings of the EnergyGuide program as required by law.

Selected Reports

Recovery Act: Progress and Challenges in Spending Weatherization Funds. GAO-12-195. Washington, D.C.: December 16, 2011.

Energy Star: Providing Opportunities for Additional Review of EPA's Decisions Could Strengthen the Program. GAO-11-888. Washington, D.C.: September 30, 2011.

Department of Energy: Advanced Technology Vehicle Loan Program Implementation Is Under Way, but Enhanced Technical Oversight and Performance Measures Are Needed. GAO-11-145. Washington, D.C.: February 28, 2011.

Recovery Act: States' and Localities' Uses of Funds and Actions Needed to Address Implementation Challenges and Bolster Accountability. GAO-10-604. Washington, D.C.: May 26, 2010.

Vehicle Fuel Economy: NHTSA and EPA's Partnership for Setting Fuel Economy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards Improved Analysis and Should be Maintained. GAO-10-336. Washington, D.C.: February 25, 2010.

Energy Efficiency: Opportunities Exist for Federal Agencies to Better Inform Household Consumers. GAO-07-1162. Washington, D.C.: September 26, 2007.

Energy Efficiency: Long-standing Problems with DOE's Program for Setting Efficiency Standards Continue to Result in Forgone Energy Savings. GAO-07-42. Washington, D.C.: January 31, 2007.

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Enclosure 6
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Exports

Priority Goal: Double U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Department of Agriculture:

- Foreign Agriculture Service;
- Foreign Market Development Program;
- Market Access Program;
- Export Credit Guarantee Program;
- Emerging Markets Program;
- Supplier Credit Export Program; and
- Agricultural Marketing Service.

Department of Commerce:

- International Trade Administration;
- Market Access and Compliance;
- Import Administration;
- Manufacturing and Services;
- U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service;
- Trade Promotion Programs;
- District Export Councils;
- SelectUSA;
- Strategic Partnership Programs;
- Market Development Cooperator Program; and
- Advocacy Center.

Department of State:

- U.S. Embassies and Consulates;
- Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs;
- Trade Policy and Programs; and
- Commercial and Business Affairs.

Export-Import Bank:

- Working Capital Guarantee Program;
- Export Credit Insurance;
- Loan Guarantee & Direct Loan Program; and
- Finance Lease Guarantees Program.

Overseas Private Investment Corporation:

- Small and Medium-Enterprise Financing;
- Structured Financing;
- Investment Insurance;
- Investment Funds; and
- Enterprise Development Network.

Small Business Administration:

- Office of International Trade;
- Small Business Development Centers;
- Export Legal Assistance Network;
- Export Express and International Trade Loan Programs;
- Export Working Capital Program; and
- State Trade and Export Promotion Grants.

U.S. Trade and Development Agency:

- Project Development Program:
    - feasibility studies;
    - pilot projects; and
    - technical assistance.
- International Business Partnership Program:
    - reverse trade missions;
    - conferences; and
    - workshops.

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

There are 12 other member agencies of the Trade Promotion Coordination Committee that could be included:

- Department of the Treasury;
- Agency for International Development;
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of Defense;
- Department of Energy;
- Department of Homeland Security;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of Labor;
- Department of Transportation;
- Office of Management and Budget;
- National Security Council/National Economic Council; and
- Council of Economic Advisors.

GAO Comments

To help achieve the National Export Initiative (NEI) and crosscutting goal of doubling the value of United States (U.S.) exports by 2014, the Export Promotion Cabinet and the 20 member agencies of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) were directed to coordinate and align export promotion and other activities, including improving foreign market access. In January 2012, the Secretary of Commerce reported that recent American export levels put the U.S. on track to achieve this goal, which requires increasing U.S. companies' exported goods and services from a total value of $1.57 trillion in 2009 to $3.14 trillion by the end of 2014. The President also recently announced plans to reorganize and improve export promotion agencies' efforts in support of this goal.

While progress in promoting U.S. exports has occurred, coordination challenges across export promotion agencies could hinder their effectiveness in supporting this priority goal. In 2002, 2006, and 2009, we reported that the TPCC made progress in coordinating federal agencies' export promotion efforts, but that coordination challenges persisted. In 2009, we found that the annual national export strategy issued by the TPCC in 2008 continued to lack an overall review of agencies' allocation of resources relative to governmentwide export promotion priorities. However, the 2011 national export strategy began to establish some consistent, shared, measurable goals, the absence of which had been a longstanding weakness. In addition, the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) led by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) plays a major role in reducing barriers to trade. The TPSC is continuing to engage in policy evaluation and implementation and is taking action on key market access and enforcement issues. However, we have identified challenges in USTR's ability to coordinate with private sector advisors and the Congress, and in USTR's strategic human capital planning and accounting for resources from agencies that support its negotiations and enforcement work. In 2009, we also reported that four free trade agreements we reviewed had largely achieved their U.S. commercial objectives, but that USTR, the Department of State (State), and the Department of Labor (Labor) monitoring and enforcement of labor and environmental provisions with the partner countries remains a challenge.

More recently, we identified challenges faced by the Department of Commerce (Commerce)'s U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (CS) and the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im), agencies that also have key roles in implementing this priority goal. CS's goals and activities generally support the NEI's priorities by, for example, arranging trade missions, assisting U.S. exporters with trade problems, and advocating on behalf of U.S. firms competing for foreign government contracts. However, we reported weaknesses in CS's performance measurement, resource allocation, and workforce planning, as well as in its cost and customer information. While CS is implementing revised performance measures in fiscal year 2012 that align more closely with the NEI, weaknesses in measuring program performance remain, which may undervalue CS's efforts and mean that policymakers will not have an accurate picture of CS's performance. In addition, CS's resource-allocation-management process does not make full use of relevant information to guide its decisions, and CS lacks key planning elements for rebuilding its diminished workforce. We have also reported on Ex-Im's role in promoting U.S. competitiveness and in supporting certain types of exports, including those by small business. As the United States' official export credit agency (ECA), Ex-Im helps U.S. firms export goods and services by providing a range of financial products. We recently reported that Ex-Im's requirements for the level of domestic content in the exports it fully finances are higher and generally less flexible than those of ECAs from other Group of Seven (G-7) countries (major industrialized countries that consult on economic issues).

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

To improve coordination and sharing of goals among the TPCC agencies, we first recommended in 2002 that the Chairman of the TPCC ensure that its national export strategies consistently

- identify specific goals established by the agencies within the strategies' broad priorities,
- identify how agencies' resources are allocated in support of their specific goals, and
- analyze the progress made in addressing the TPCC's recommendations from the prior annual strategies.

The TPCC agreed with our findings, but based on our assessment in 2006, we determined that the TPCC had not implemented our recommendations. While in 2009 we reported on positive steps taken by the TPCC to address these issues, we believe the underlying challenges that prompted our recommendations persist and we have begun new work on interagency collaboration. Similarly, in February 2012, the President directed the Export Promotion Cabinet and TPCC to enhance program coordination, customer service, interagency budget allocation, coordination among offices and staff, and business competitiveness initiatives.

To facilitate better consultation and resource coordination for trade promotion, we have made a series of recommendations to USTR and partner agencies. In 2009, we recommended that USTR, State, and Labor update plans for implementing and overseeing Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to make the FTAs more effective in producing results. We have also recommended that USTR and other managing agencies improve information access and timeliness of congressional consultations, and that the U.S. Trade Representative develop a strategic human capital management system addressing the areas of strategic human capital leadership, planning, recruitment and retention, and performance management. We have been working with USTR and the other agencies to assure continued progress in addressing our recommendations.

We have also recommended in 2009, 2010, and 2011 that Commerce take a number of steps to improve CS's export indicators and resource data and improve its capacity to achieve its goals, including using customer-service-related data in CS's performance measures, reviewing CS's Overseas Resource Allocation Model, and improving CS procedures for determining costs and setting user fees for export promotion services, workforce planning, and cost estimating related to CS's budget estimate. Commerce generally agreed with these recommendations and has begun to take actions to address these issues, and we will continue to monitor their progress in implementing our recommendations.

In addition, we recommended in 2012 that in order to improve Ex-Im's efforts at promoting competitiveness, Ex-Im should conduct a systematic review to assess how well its domestic content policy continues to support Ex-Im's mission. While Ex-Im stated it considers content policy in its annual competitiveness assessments and did not comment directly on our recommendation, we will monitor what actions the agency takes to address this issue.

Selected Reports

U.S. Export-Import Bank: Actions Needed to Promote Competitiveness and International Cooperation. GAO-12-294. Washington, D.C.: February 7, 2012.

National Export Initiative: U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service Should Improve Performance and Resource Allocation Management. GAO-11-909. Washington, D.C.: September 29, 2011.

Export Promotion: Observations on the Export-Import Bank's Efforts to Achieve U.S. Policy Goals. GAO-10-1069T. Washington, D.C.: September 29, 2010.

Export Promotion: Increases in Commercial Service Workforce Should Be Better Planned. GAO-10-874. Washington, D.C.: August 31, 2010.

International Trade: Effective Export Programs Can Help in Achieving U.S. Economic Goals. GAO-09-480T. Washington, D.C.: March 2009.

International Trade: Four Free Trade Agreements GAO Reviewed Have Resulted in Commercial Benefits, But Challenges on Labor and Environment Remain. GAO-09-439. Washington, D.C.: July 10, 2009.

Export Promotion: Commerce Needs Better Information to Evaluate Its Fee-Based Programs and Customers. GAO-09-144. Washington, D.C.: March 4, 2009.

International Trade: An Analysis of Free Trade Agreements and Congressional and Private Sector Consultations under Trade Promotion Authority. GAO-08-59. Washington, D.C.: November 7, 2007.

Export Promotion: Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee's Role Remains Limited. GAO-06-660T. Washington, D.C.: April 26, 2006.

International Trade: USTR Would Benefit from Greater Use of Strategic Human Capital Management Principles. GAO-06-167. Washington, D.C.: December 6, 2005.

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Enclosure 7
<u>Crosscutting Policy Goal: Job Training</u>

Goal Statement: Ensure our country has one of the most skilled workforces in the world by preparing 2 million workers with skills training by 2015 and improving the coordination and delivery of job-training services.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Department of Labor:

- Workforce Investment Act programs;
- Community College Initiative;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance & Career Training Grants;
- Workforce Innovation Fund;
- Pathways Back to Work Fund;
- H-1B grants;
- Job Corps; and
- YouthBuild.

Department of Education:

- Community College Initiative; and
- Career Academies.

Small Business Administration:

- Training the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs;
- Small Business Development Centers, Women Business Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives;
- SBA's 68 District Offices;
- Veterans Entrepreneurship Pilot program;
- Skill Up America Pilot with Department of Labor and Department of Education; and
- Start Young Initiative Pilot with Department of Labor and Department of Education

Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- JobsPlus.

Tax Expenditures:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

The list of contributing agencies/programs does not include a range of programs that we identified in our January 2011 report on multiple employment and training programs. Each of the programs in that report is specifically designed to enhance the specific job skills of individuals in order to increase their employability, identify job opportunities, and/or help job seekers obtain employment. The 2011 report includes programs at the:

- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Defense;
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of Justice; and
- Department of Veterans Affairs.

The 2011 report also lists programs at the Department of Labor and Department of Education that were not named in the federal government performance plan.

GAO Comments

The federal government performance plan proposes expanding investment in community colleges to train workers and build partnerships with businesses. Our previous work found a fair degree of integration between community colleges and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) one-stop centers. The report found cost sharing and improved communication among integrated programs, but concluded that it was uncertain whether the efforts of the Department of Labor (Labor) and Department of Education (Education) to build linkages between community colleges and the workforce system would be successful in encouraging community colleges to focus on workforce development. Community college and workforce officials cited state funding and leadership as factors that facilitate integration but identified WIA performance-system measures and WIA funding issues as impediments. Our recent work on 14 innovative collaborations among local workforce boards, community colleges, employers, and others highlighted their successes in meeting critical skill needs in diverse sectors, such as health care, manufacturing, and agriculture. This work identified six factors that facilitated such collaborations, including focusing on urgent workforce needs, leveraging resources, and providing employer-responsive services.

The federal government performance plan also proposes publicizing more information on program performance and conducting rigorous evaluations as strategies to increase accountability and support system reform. The plan focuses on 18 programs across 4 agencies. Our previous work that focused more broadly across the federal government identified 47 federal employment and training programs in 9 agencies for fiscal year 2009. We found that almost all the 47 programs tracked multiple-outcome measures, and many programs tracked similar measures. Previous work also noted that Labor has made strides in measuring outcomes across Labor programs and improving the accuracy of performance data by requiring states to conduct data validation efforts. It has also made progress in states' ability to share data for tracking WIA performance. However, a recurring theme of our work on employment and training programs has been that more information is needed on what approaches work and for whom. Of the 47 programs identified in previous work, only 5 reported demonstrating whether outcomes could be attributed to the program through an impact study, and about half of all the programs had not had a performance review since 2004.

The plan proposes expanding career academies in high schools and building on Recovery Act programs like those for low income youth. In examining at-risk youth, our previous work has cited research on career academies. That research found the academies significantly increased students' school attendance rates and number of credits earned toward graduation and significantly cut dropout rates. The research available at the time did not address the effect of such academies on students' lives after leaving school. Our Recovery Act work found that while states were generally successful in gearing up quickly to serve increased numbers of youth in WIA summer employment and training activities, measuring actual outcomes proved challenging and potentially revealed little about what the program achieved.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in 2012 that Labor compile information on workforce boards that effectively leverage WIA funds with other funding sources and disseminate this information in a readily accessible manner, as a way to better support the capacity of the local workforce-investment system to collaborate with employers and other partners. As of April 27, 2012, Labor said it is developing a new online technical assistance system that will allow it to tag, label, organize, and disseminate content in a readily accessible manner. Labor expects to complete the system in late calendar year 2013. In addition, Labor said it will update a website, Workforce3One, it uses to provide technical assistance. According to Labor, the updated site will include a feature that highlights emerging and evidence-based practices and feature items related to leveraging funding, particularly funding to support career pathways.

We recommended in 2011 that the Secretaries of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should work together to develop and disseminate information that could inform efforts to increase administrative efficiencies, including consolidating program administrative structures and co-locating partners. We recommended that Labor and HHS examine the incentives for states and localities to undertake such initiatives. As of April 27, 2012, Labor reported that the department will award competitive grants to encourage greater efficiency by states and local areas in their service delivery and plans to make additional funds available to pilot a model under which the government pays only for demonstrated results. In addition, Labor officials said Labor, HHS, and Education are committed to providing cross-program training and technical assistance to further align programs. As an example, Labor enumerated the types of technical assistance and guidance issued as part of a grant initiative. These grants were intended to help students and workers gain industry-recognized and academic credentials through better alignment of federal education, training and employment services. Officials said Labor, HHS, and other federal agencies, had been meeting to promote joint strategic planning, but concluded that legislative changes were needed to support such planning. However, Labor officials said Labor and the other departments would continue to examine incentives for states and localities to undertake such planning. According to agency officials, HHS and Labor continue to coordinate measurement and research plans to align their activities.

We also recommended in 2011 that Labor develop processes to involve outside experts in setting the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) research agenda. According to Labor, as of April 27, 2012, it engaged a panel of outside experts in the development of ETA's soon-to-be-released 5-year research plan; now requires the identification of experts as members of technical working groups for large scale evaluations that ETA contracts; engages a third party organization to manage peer review groups; and has engaged its colleagues in the department's Chief Evaluation Office and at HHS and Education to review reports prior to publication.

Selected Reports

Workforce Investment Act: Innovative Collaborations between Workforce Boards and Employers Helped Meet Local Needs. GAO-12-97. Washington, D.C.: January 19, 2012.

Employment and Training Administration: More Actions Needed To Improve Transparency And Accountability Of Its Research Program. GAO-11-285. *Washington, D.C.: March 15, 2011.*

Department of Labor: Further Management Improvements Needed to Address Information Technology and Financial Controls. GAO-11-157. Washington, D.C.: March 16, 2011.

Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information on Colocating Services and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies. GAO-11-92. Washington, D.C.: January 13, 2011.

Employment and Training Administration: Increased Authority and Accountability Could Improve Research Program. GAO-10-243. Washington, D.C.: January 29, 2010.

Workforce Investment Act: Labor Has Made Progress in Addressing Areas of Concern, but More Focus Needed on Understanding What Works and What Doesn't. GAO-09-

396T. Washington, D.C.: February 26, 2009.

GAO Contacts

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Enclosure 8
Crosscutting Policy Goal: Cybersecurity

Goal Statement: Achieve 95 percent use of critical cybersecurity capabilities on federal executive branch information systems by 2014, including strong authentication, Trusted Internet Connections, and Continuous Monitoring.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Department of Homeland Security:

- National Cyber Security Division.

Department of Commerce:

- National Institute of Standards and Technology (Computer Security Division).

General Services Administration:

- Federal Acquisition Service;
- Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies; and
- Office of Government-wide Policy.

Federal Agencies:

- Agency Chief Information Officers.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for this Goal Based on GAO Work

Department of Defense:

- National Security Agency; and
- Cyber Command.

GAO Comments

Based on our March 2010 report on the Trusted Internet Connections (TIC), we found that none of the 23 federal agencies included in our review, as of September 2009, had met all of the requirements of the TIC initiative. Although most agencies reported that they have made progress toward reducing their external connections and implementing critical security capabilities, most agencies have also experienced delays in their implementation efforts.

In September 2011, we reported on the federal government's implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12), which ordered the establishment of a governmentwide standard for secure and reliable forms of identification for employees and contractors who access government-controlled facilities and information systems, known as personal identity verification (PIV) credentials. In that report we found that overall, federal agencies have made progress issuing PIV cards to employees and contractors but have made limited progress in implementing the electronic capabilities of the cards for accessing federal facilities and information systems.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), through its annual reporting guidance to federal agencies on their implementation of the *Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA) (Title III of Public Law 107-347),* measures the progress of agencies towards meeting its TIC, PIV and continuous monitoring goals. As of fiscal year 2011, based on agency-reported FISMA data, we have seen that federal agencies have increased their implementation of TIC, PIV, and continuous monitoring programs.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in October 2011 that the Director of OMB incorporate performance targets for metrics in annual FISMA reporting guidance to agencies and inspectors general. In response to our recommendation, OMB stated that since unlike in previous years, OMB and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) now issue separate memorandums regarding FISMA reporting guidance, it is more appropriate for the performance targets to be included in DHS's memorandum since that is where the metrics are listed. We agreed that including the performance targets in the metrics issued by DHS would meet the intent of our recommendation. DHS's Director of the Departmental GAO/OIG Liaison Office noted that he was pleased with our acknowledgment of efforts made by DHS to improve the cybersecurity posture of federal agencies.

We made a total of 24 recommendations to 9 agencies to assist in implementing the HSPD-12 program's objectives. We recommended that eight departments and agencies develop and implement plans for PIV-based access to government-controlled facilities and information systems and require staff with PIV cards to use them for access to systems and networks. Of the nine agencies to which we made recommendations, six (Department of Commerce, DHS, Department of the Interior (Interior), Department of Labor (Labor), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)) concurred with our recommendations. DHS, Interior, Labor, and NASA also provided information regarding specific actions they have taken or plan on taking that address portions of our recommendations. As of April 2012, several agencies (Interior, DHS, and NRC) have reported that they have taken actions to address specific recommendations, while the remaining agencies have indicated they have begun taking steps that would address the recommendations.

Selected Reports

Information Security: Weaknesses Continue Amid New Federal Efforts to Implement Requirements. GAO-12-137. Washington, D.C.: October 3, 2011.

Personal ID Verification: Agencies Should Set a Higher Priority on Using the Capabilities of Standardized Identification Cards, GAO-11-751. Washington, D.C.: September 20, 2011.

Defense Department Cyber Efforts: DOD Faces Challenges In Its Cyber Activities, GAO-11-75. Washington, D.C.: July 25, 2011.

Cybersecurity: Progress Made but Challenges Remain in Defining and Coordinating the Comprehensive National Initiative, GAO-10-338. Washington, D.C.: March 5, 2010.

Information Security: Concerted Effort Needed to Consolidate and Secure Internet Connections at Federal Agencies, GAO-10-237. Washington, D.C.: March 12, 2010.

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Enclosure 9
<u>Crosscutting Policy Goal: Sustainability</u>

Goal Statement: By 2020, the federal government will reduce its direct greenhouse gas emissions by 28 percent and will reduce its indirect greenhouse gas emissions by 13 percent by 2020 (from 2008 baseline).

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

The Interagency Steering Committee on Federal Sustainability—composed of a Senior Sustainability Officer, designated by the head of each federal agency—serves to facilitate implementation of the Executive Order and implement programs to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

None because all federal agencies are members of the Interagency Steering Committee on Federal Sustainability.

GAO Comments

Federal agencies—which collectively are the nation's largest energy consumer—for decades have been required to meet increasingly stringent sustainability goals, including reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Accordingly, we have a large body of work on federal efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within federal buildings and within the federal fleet of vehicles. We have reported on efforts by agencies to decrease fossil fuel and increase renewable energy used in response to requirements in statutes and executive orders, including investing about $4.5 billion in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) to convert existing federal facilities into high performance green buildings. In addition, in fiscal year 2012, we identified 185 renewable energy initiatives being implemented in the facilities and vehicle fleets of a range of federal agencies, primarily the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Energy and Interior. The renewable energy initiatives are aimed at reducing fossil fuels used—and greenhouse gases emitted—by the agencies. We have reported that agencies face challenges in continuing efforts to reduce energy use because of expiring credits for renewable energy purchases and the ending of funding through the Recovery Act. We have also reported on agencies' efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the federal vehicle fleet. For example, we reported that the United States Postal Service (USPS), which has the world's largest civilian fleet, along with 20 other agencies, have met their requirement to acquire alternative fuel vehicles by acquiring flex-fuel vehicles that can operate on either gasoline or 85 percent ethanol, which emits fewer greenhouse gases; however, the agencies often continue to fuel the vehicles with gasoline because 85 percent ethanol is not readily available and can be more expensive.

In 2008, we reported that the greenhouse gas emissions metric for federal facilities did not accurately reflect agencies' performance in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Specifically, the metric was tied to agencies' reductions in energy intensity, but did not account for whether greenhouse gas emissions were reduced in absolute terms. We recommended that the Department of Energy, in conjunction with the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive—which is housed at the President's Council on Environmental Quality, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, and stewards the Interagency Steering Committee on Federal Sustainability—as well as the Office of Management and Budget, establish a metric that more accurately reflects agencies' performance in reducing emissions. Accordingly, the administration issued Executive Order 13514 in 2009, which made reduction of greenhouse gas emissions a priority for federal agencies and set deadlines and targets for achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions in absolute terms.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in 2008 that in order to help agencies address the challenges they face in meeting energy goals into the future, the Secretary of Energy should finalize and issue guidance that instructs agencies in developing long-term energy plans that consider the key elements of effective plans identified in the report. In 2008, we also made a series of recommendations to the Department of Energy regarding alternative fuel vehicles in the federal fleet. As of April 2012, the agency had issued guidance that begins to address both recommendations and we continue to monitor the Department of Energy's efforts in both of these areas.

In 2008, we raised a matter for congressional consideration: that in order to help agencies more efficiently use their resources to increase use of alternative fuel and decrease use of petroleum, Congress may wish to consider aligning the federal fleet's alternative-fuel-vehicle acquisition requirements and its fueling requirements with current alternative fuel availability, as well as revising those requirements as appropriate. We continue to monitor Congress' actions in this area.

Selected Reports

Renewable Energy: An Inventory of Fiscal Year 2010 Federal Initiatives. GAO-12-259SP. Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2012.

United States Postal Service: Strategy Needed to Address Aging Delivery Fleet. GAO-11-386. Washington, D.C.: May 5, 2011.

Defense Infrastructure: DOD Needs to Take Actions to Address Challenges in Meeting Federal Renewable Energy Goals. GAO-10-104. Washington, D.C.: December 18, 2009.

Federal Energy Management: Agencies Are Acquiring Alternative Fuel Vehicles but Face Challenges in Meeting Other Fleet Objectives. GAO-09-75R. Washington, D.C.:

October 22, 2008.

Federal Energy Management: Addressing Challenges through Better Plans and Clarifying the Greenhouse Gas Emission Measure Will Help Meet Long-term Goals for Buildings. GAO-08-977. Washington, D.C.: September 30, 2008.

U.S. Postal Service: Vulnerability to Fluctuating Fuel Prices Requires Improved Tracking and Monitoring of Consumption Information. GAO-07-244. Washington, D.C.: February 16, 2007.

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Enclosure 10
Crosscutting Management Improvement Goal: Financial Management/Improper Payments

Goal Statement: The federal government will reduce the governmentwide improper payment rate by at least 2 percentage points by fiscal year 2014, from 5.42 percent in 2009.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

This goal applies to all programs that annually report improper payment estimates. The governmentwide performance is driven by programs that make a significant amount of improper payments every year. In fiscal year 2011, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reported an estimated governmentwide improper payment rate and amount of about 4.7 percent and $115 billion, respectively, including both overpayments and underpayments. In total, Some 79 programs within 17 agencies contributed to this amount. Of the $115 billion in improper payments, roughly 80 percent was made by five programs: Medicare Fee-for-Service, Medicaid, and Medicare Advantage (Part C), within the Department of Health and Human Services; the Earned Income Tax Credit, within the Department of the Treasury; and Unemployment Insurance, within the Department of Labor. The remaining 20 percent of the governmentwide improper payment amount was made by the other 74 programs that reported improper payment estimates.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for this Goal, Based on GAO Work

We have reported that some agencies have not yet reported estimates for all risk-susceptible programs and some agencies' estimating methodologies need to be refined. We also found that internal control weaknesses exist, heightening the risk that improper payments may occur and not be detected promptly.

GAO Comments

Our past work on governmentwide improper payments has not specifically focused on the 2 percent governmentwide improper payment reduction goal. However, our governmentwide improper payment work can be related to efforts to reduce improper payments. In 2010, the President set goals, as part of the Accountable Government Initiative, for federal agencies to reduce overall improper payments by $50 billion, and recapture at least $2 billion in actual improper payments (e.g. improper contract overpayments or overpayments to healthcare providers) by the end of fiscal year 2012.

Federal agencies reported improper payment estimates totaling $115.3 billion in fiscal year 2011, a decrease of $5.3 billion from the revised prior year's reported estimate of $120.6 billion. Further, a number of federal agencies have reported progress in reducing improper payment error rates in some programs and activities. For example, we identified 40 federal agency programs, or about 50 percent of the total programs reporting improper payment estimates in fiscal year 2011, that reported a reduction in the error rate of estimated improper payments in fiscal year 2011 when compared to fiscal year 2010 error rates. We caution, however, that these rates have not been independently verified or audited.

Despite reported progress in reducing estimated improper payment amounts and error rates for some programs and activities during fiscal year 2011, the federal government continues to face challenges in determining the full extent of improper payments. Specifically, some agencies have not yet reported estimates for all risk-susceptible programs, and some agencies' estimating methodologies need to be refined. We have also found that internal control weaknesses exist, heightening the risk of improper payments occurring. Until federal agencies are able to implement effective processes to completely and accurately identify the full extent of improper payments and implement appropriate corrective actions to effectively reduce improper payments, the federal government will not have reasonable assurance that the use of taxpayer funds is adequately safeguarded.

A number of actions are under way across the federal government to help advance improper payment reduction goals. These initiatives, as well as additional actions in the future, will be needed to advance federal government's efforts to reduce improper payments. Identifying and analyzing the root causes of improper payments is key to developing effective corrective actions and implementing the controls needed to advance the federal government's efforts to reduce and prevent improper payments. In this regard, implementing strong preventive controls can serve as the frontline defense against improper payments. In addition, agencies can also enhance detective controls to identify and recover overpayments. For example, an initiative that enhances incentives for grantees, such as state and local governments, could help increase attention to preventing, identifying, and recovering improper payments.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We have made numerous recommendations in reports on agency- and program-specific work that we performed. This work included recommendations focused on more accurately and completely estimating improper payments, preventing and detecting improper payments, ensuring corrective action strategies to effectively reduce improper payments, and improving the recovery of improper payments.

For example, in the past 5 years, we have issued more than 15 reports that focus on improving agency activities and federal oversight of state activities designed to reduce Medicare and Medicaid improper payments. Our most recent report, issued in April 2012, discussed the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) implementation of new provider and supplier enrollment procedures and other measures to help ensure that only those qualified are approved to bill Medicare and indicates the important steps that have not been completed. We have ongoing work to assess CMS's actions to address Medicare improper payments, including: use of prepayment edits to avoid paying erroneously; examining the types of providers and suppliers involved in fraud investigations; examining CMS's implementation of its new Fraud Prevention System, which uses analytic methods to identify potential fraud; and assessing the quality of data in CMS's provider enrollment database. We are also currently examining a range of issues to address Medicaid improper payments, including CMS and state progress and coordination in reducing improper payments; reasons for growth in Medicaid supplemental payments and the extent that audits of certain of these payments are facilitating oversight; and quality of data in Medicaid data expenditure systems.

In 2012, we recommended that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) take action to more accurately and completely estimate and aggregate improper payments for the Foster Care program, including state-level data, and ensure that its methodology is statistically valid. We also recommended that ACF take actions to help ensure that the Foster Care program implements procedures requiring states to report on corrective actions whenever a state's estimated improper payment dollar error rate exceeds a specified target level. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) generally concurred with three recommendations related to improving the improper payment estimation methodology for the Foster Care program. Specifically, HHS generally agreed to (1) estimate and report improper payments related to administrative costs, (2) provide specific procedures to identify and report any underpayments and duplicate or excessive payment errors, and (3) revise procedures for calculating the aggregate state-level margins of error to derive an overall, inflation adjusted, program estimate.

In 2011, we recommended the Social Security Administration (SSA) take steps to help avoid making improper payments to Disability Insurance program (DI) recipients who may be working, such as developing data sharing agreements to access earnings-related databases, and to improve collection of DI program overpayments, such as enhancing tracking and reporting of overpayments and the review of repayment agreements. SSA agreed with four of five recommendations we made to the Commissioner to strengthen SSA's processes and management controls over the detection, prevention, and recovery of DI overpayments. We continue to monitor this area.

In 2009, we made recommendations focused on the Department of Defense (DOD) improving efforts to address improper payment and recovery auditing requirements of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 and the Recovery Auditing Act, which included performing oversight and monitoring activities to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the improper payment data submitted by the DOD agencies and the military services. DOD disagreed with 12 of our 13 recommendations designed to strengthen its improper payment and recovery auditing processes. DOD stated that generally the actions envisioned by our recommendations were already being accomplished within the department or were not required by OMB and thus, such direction from us was not necessary. Although DOD has efforts underway, it has not yet established the processes and detailed guidance necessary to effectively implement either Improper Payments Information Act or the Recovery Auditing Act. Accordingly, we continue to believe that our recommendations are critical for DOD to enhance its efforts to minimize improper payments and recover those that are made.

Selected Reports

Medicare Program Integrity: CMS Continues Efforts to Strengthen the Screening of Providers and Suppliers. GAO-12-351. Washington, D.C.: April 10, 2012.

Improper Payments: Remaining Challenges and Strategies for Governmentwide Reduction Efforts. GAO-12-573T. Washington, D.C.: March 28, 2012.

Improper Payments: Moving Forward with Governmentwide Reduction Strategies. GAO-12-405T. Washington, D.C.: February 7, 2012.

Foster Care Program: Improved Processes Needed to Estimate Improper Payments and Evaluate Related Corrective Actions. GAO-12-312. Washington, D.C.: March 7, 2012.

Improper Payments: Recent Efforts to Address Improper Payments and Remaining Challenges. GAO-11-575T. Washington, D.C.: April 15, 2011.

Disability Insurance: SSA Can Improve Efforts to Detect, Prevent, and Recover Overpayments. GAO-11-724. Washington, D.C.: July 27, 2011.

Improper Payments: Status of Fiscal Year 2010 Federal Improper Payments Reporting. GAO-11-443R. Washington, D.C.: March 25, 2011.

Medicare Recovery Audit Contracting: Weaknesses Remain in Addressing Vulnerabilities to Improper Payments, Although Improvements Made to Contractor Oversight. GAO-10-143. Washington, D.C.: March 31, 2010.

Improper Payments: Significant Improvements Needed in DOD's Efforts to Address Improper Payment and Recovery Auditing Requirements. GAO-09-442. Washington, D.C.: July 29, 2009.

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Enclosure 11
Crosscutting Management Improvement Goal: Human Capital Management/Closing Skill Gaps

Goal Statement: Close critical skills gaps in the federal workforce to improve mission performance. By September 30, 2013, close the skills gaps by 50 percent for 3 to 5 critical federal government occupations or competencies, and close additional agency-specific high-risk occupation and competency gaps.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

In collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management and the Department of Defense are leading a Chief Human Capital Officers Council working group for this crosscutting goal. Other agencies and the federal management councils will also contribute to the effort.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for this Goal Based on GAO Work

None because all Chief Financial Officers Act agencies are listed.

GAO Comments

Skills gaps in critical occupations across the federal government have the potential to place agency missions and taxpayer funds at risk. We discussed the challenge of closing the federal government's current and emerging critical skills gaps as a high-risk area in our *2011 High-Risk Update* because of the long-standing lack of leadership in addressing this management challenge.

In prior reports, we have recommended that federal agencies plan, implement, and monitor strategies to recruit, develop, and retain personnel with the needed critical skills. We have also stated that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) must have the capacity to effectively assist and lead agencies in the implementation of governmentwide human capital reforms, and work collaboratively with agencies through interagency partnerships, such as the Chief Human Capital Officers Council (CHCOC), to address critical skills gaps that cut across several federal agencies.

In February 2012, the CHCOC working group identified a set of mission-critical occupations existing in multiple federal agencies and will begin formulating an implementation plan that outlines steps to close these skill gaps. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) staff commented that the success of this initiative will be dependent on the efforts of the CHCOC in concert with the senior leadership of the agencies to ensure all aspects of the action plan are fully implemented, that progress is effectively monitored and that additional corrective actions are identified and implemented as needed. Additionally, the CHCOC and agency senior leadership, in partnership with OPM, must ensure the process is appropriately institutionalized into the federal government's human capital management operations.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

Our prior work has shown that critical skills gaps exist across multiple federal agencies and include various occupations. In 2009, our review of the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security concluded that shortages in foreign language skills could be negatively affecting several aspects of U.S. diplomacy, including security operations. As such, we recommended that the Secretary of State address some key human capital challenges including staffing foreign missions with officials who have appropriate language skills. The State Department agreed with our recommendation and, as of April 2012, it had taken steps to address language shortfalls; however, it did not address the issues we raised with respect to Diplomatic Security in its Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review.

Additionally, in 2010, we issued four reports identifying critical skills gaps affecting the operations at the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of the Interior (Interior), the Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Our recommendations to address these critical skills gaps ranged from having USAID develop a comprehensive workforce plan for its entire workforce to a more specific recommendation that the Department of the Interior take steps to attract staff qualified to accurately measure oil and gas production on federal lands and waters.

- At DOD we recommended that in order to improve the development, implementation, and evaluation of acquisition workforce training, and in order to demonstrate and track how training efforts contribute to improved acquisition workforce performance, the Secretary of Defense should direct the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Technology and Logistics Acquisition to establish milestones for the development of metrics to measure how acquisition certification training improves the proficiency and capability of the acquisition workforce. Although DOD did not concur with this recommendation, DOD officials agreed that metrics are needed and the department continues to focus training on helping to improve organizational performance. The officials indicated that developing metrics is an ongoing process and could take multiple years to complete.
- At Interior, we have reported that agencies have encountered persistent problems in hiring, training, and retaining sufficient staff to meet its oversight and management of oil and gas operations on federal lands and waters. We recently began work to examine Interior's progress on this issue.
- We also recommended that in order to improve USAID's capacity to effectively and strategically plan and manage its entire workforce, the Administrator of USAID should develop a comprehensive workforce plan that takes into account USAID's total workforce, including nondirect-hire staff. We recommended that the workforce plan include an analysis of overall workforce and competency gaps and the steps the agency plans to take to address these gaps. USAID concurred with our recommendation and is taking steps to address it. For example, USAID stated that it is developing a comprehensive, automated competency

management system, which it hopes to have completely operational by fiscal year 2013, as well as implementation plans for overseas staffing requirements. We continue to monitor USAID efforts to implement this recommendation.

- We also recommended that, as the SEC establishes the newly created Office of Credit Ratings, it develop recruitment, hiring, and training plans to ensure that the office has the skills required to fulfill its oversight mission. SEC agreed with this recommendation and, as of April 2012, SEC officials reported that they were hiring staff with the appropriate financial expertise.

Selected Reports

Defense Acquisition Workforce: DOD's Training Program Demonstrates Many Attributes of Effectiveness, but Improvement is Needed. GAO-11-22. Washington, D.C.: October 28, 2010.

Federal Aviation Administration: Agency is Taking Steps to Plan for and Train Its Technician Workforce, but a More Strategic Approach is Warranted. GAO-11-91. Washington, D.C.: October 22, 2010.

Human Capital: Further Actions Needed to Enhance DOD's Civilian Strategic Workforce Plan. GAO-10-814R. Washington, D.C.: September 27, 2010.

Securities and Exchange Commission: Action Needed to Improve Rating Agency Registration Program and Performance-Related Disclosures. GAO-10-782. Washington, D.C.: September 22, 2010.

Foreign Assistance: USAID Needs to Improve Its Strategic Planning to Address Current and Future Workforce Needs. GAO-10-496. Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2010.

Language Access: Selected Agencies Can Improve Services to Limited English Proficient Persons. GAO-10-91. Washington, D.C.: April 26, 2010.

Oil and Gas Management: Interior's Oil and Gas Production Verification Efforts Do Not Provide Reasonable Assurance of Accurate Measurement of Production Volumes. GAO-10-313. Washington, D.C.: March 13, 2010.

State Department: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review. GAO-10-156. Washington, D.C.: November 12, 2009.

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Enclosure 12
Crosscutting Management Improvement Goal: Information Technology Management/Data Center Consolidation

Goal Statement: Improve IT service delivery, reduce waste, and save $3 billion in taxpayer dollars by closing at least 1,200 data centers by fiscal year 2015.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

Twenty-four agencies are participating in the Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative (FDCCI). Agency FDCCI efforts are led by agency Chief Information Officers in conjunction with agency mission programs and management functions, including real property, acquisition, sustainability, and security. FDCCI participating agencies include:

- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Commerce;
- Department of Defense;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Energy;
- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Homeland Security;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of Justice;
- Department of Labor;
- Department of State;
- Department of Transportation;
- Department of the Treasury;
- Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- General Services Administration;
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
- National Science Foundation;
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission;
- Office of Personnel Management;

- Small Business Administration;
- Social Security Administration; and
- U.S. Agency for International Development.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

FDCCI could be expanded to include other members of the Chief Information Officer Council, such as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and other independent executive branch agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Federal Communications Commission.

GAO Comments

In order to accomplish FDCCI's goals, OMB launched the Data Center Consolidation Task Force comprised of the data-center-consolidation program managers from each participating agency. OMB officials stated that this task force is critical to driving forward on individual agency-consolidation goals and to meeting the overall federal consolidation targets. In July 2011, we reported that agencies had incomplete data center inventories and consolidation plans, but that agency plans still indicated savings of about $700 million through 2015.

Consequently, we made recommendations to both OMB and the participating agencies that were intended to better position the FDCCI for success. In response to our report, OMB required agencies, in addition to an existing requirement to update their inventories, to complete their consolidation plans. Beginning in October 2011, all of the agencies posted their updated plans online. We have ongoing work assessing the completeness of the updated inventories and plans. As of April 2012, our preliminary analysis shows that not all agency inventories and plans have been updated to include all required information, such as consolidation milestones, performance metrics, and savings projections.

OMB has also expanded the definition of a data center from facilities over 500 square feet to one that includes data centers of all sizes. This change resulted in an expanded data center baseline of 3,133 centers, an increase from the 2,094 centers originally reported by agencies. In December 2011, the Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO) announced a revised goal of closing over 1,200 of the 3,133 centers in the new baseline and the *Analytical Perspectives* for the President's budget for fiscal year 2013 expects data center consolidation to save $3 billion by 2015. We have reported that moving forward to consolidate obviously redundant or underutilized centers is warranted—and should result in immediate cost savings and increased efficiency. With the FDCCI's new goals in mind, the success of the initiative will be based, in large part, on continued efforts to oversee the development of complete agency inventories and comprehensive consolidation plans. Without either, agencies are at increased risk that they will be ill-prepared to manage a transformation as significant as that which has been proposed by the Federal CIO. Such a lack of preparation could slow the consolidations and reduce expected savings and efficiencies.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in 2011 that in order to better ensure the FDCCI improves governmental efficiency and achieves cost savings, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) direct the Federal Chief Information Officer to, among other things, require that agencies identify limitations in data center inventory contents, require that agencies complete missing elements from their consolidation plans, and monitor agencies' implementations of their plans. We also recommended that each agency participating in the FDCCI complete its data center inventories and consolidation plan.

In response to our report, in July 2011, OMB required the 24 FDCCI agencies to complete their consolidation plans. OMB further required agencies to certify the actions taken to verify their inventory data and to identify any data limitations in their inventories or plans. Beginning in October 2011, all of the agencies posted their updated plans online. We have ongoing work assessing the completeness of agencies' updated inventories and plans. As of April 2012, our preliminary analysis shows that not all inventories and plans have been updated to include all required information.

Selected Reports

Data Center Consolidation: Agencies Need to Complete Inventories and Plans to Achieve Expected Savings. GAO-11-565. Washington, D.C.: July 19, 2011.

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Enclosure 13

Crosscutting Management Improvement Goal: Procurement and Acquisition Management/Strategic Sourcing

Goal Statement: Reduce the costs of acquiring common products and services by agencies' strategic sourcing of at least two new commodities or services in both 2013 and 2014 that yield at least a 10 percent savings.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

The specific Office of Management and Budget initiatives that contribute to this goal include:

- Campaign to Cut Waste;
- Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative; and
- Shared First Strategy.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

None because the Office of Management and Budget initiatives listed are governmentwide initiatives.

GAO Comments

The federal government could save billions of dollars annually by leveraging its enormous buying power through strategic sourcing. This approach involves a range of activities—from developing a better picture of what an agency is spending on various types of supplies and services, to taking an enterprisewide approach to procurement, to developing new ways of doing business. Since 2002, spending on federal contracts has more than doubled to more than $540 billion in 2010, consuming a significant share of agencies' discretionary budgets. For many years, we have reported that because procurement at federal departments and agencies is generally decentralized, the federal government is not fully leveraging its aggregate buying power and that acquisition leaders across the government needed to more fully embrace strategic sourcing beginning with collecting and analyzing procurement spending data. In 2011, we found that many federal agencies had begun making progress using strategic sourcing to achieve cost savings and other efficiencies. For example, the Department of Homeland Security reported saving about $347 million in fiscal year 2010 through enterprisewide contracts and participation in federal strategic sourcing initiatives. Additionally, we found that the office supply II federal strategic sourcing initiative launched in 2010 has produced governmentwide savings.

The strategic sourcing priority goal provides additional emphasis to help agencies implement strategic sourcing approaches. While this goal is a step in the right direction, it is not clear how agencies will measure savings to meet the 10 percent savings target. In our prior work, we found that agency officials were confused about what constitutes savings because of the Office of Management and Budget's broad and changing guidance on acquisition savings initiatives. Moreover, we identified data and other limitations related to the magnitude of savings achieved through the office supply strategic sourcing initiative. We have ongoing work on strategic sourcing.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

Currently, we do not have key open recommendations or matters for congressional consideration related to this goal, but we have ongoing work related to this issue.

Selected Reports

Strategic Sourcing: Office Supplies Study Had Limitations, but New Initiative Shows Potential for Savings. GAO-12-178. Washington D.C.: December 20, 2011.

Federal Contracting: OMB's Acquisition Savings Initiative Had Results, but Improvements Needed. GAO-12-57. Washington D.C.: November 15, 2011.

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Enclosure 14
Crosscutting Management Improvement Goal: Real Property Management

Goal Statement: The federal government will manage real property effectively to generate $3 billion in cost savings by the end of 2012.

Responsible Agencies Identified in the Federal Government Performance Plan

The Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Financial Management, and Division of General Government Programs, the General Services Administration's Office of Government-Wide Policy, and the agencies, listed below.

- Department of Agriculture;
- Department of Commerce;
- Department of Defense;
- Department of Education;
- Department of Energy;
- Department of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Homeland Security;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Department of the Interior;
- Department of Justice;
- Department of Labor;
- Department of State;
- Department of Transportation;
- Department of the Treasury;
- Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- General Services Administration;
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
- National Science Foundation;
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission;
- Office of Personnel Management;
- Small Business Administration;
- Social Security Administration; and

- U.S. Agency for International Development.

Additional Relevant Departments, Agencies, or Programs for This Goal Based on GAO Work

None because all Chief Financial Officers Act agencies are listed.

GAO Comments

We have identified real property management as a high-risk area due, in part, to the presence of excess and underutilized assets. We identified that improving real property management would require a governmentwide effort among land-holding agencies. In order to address the lack of a governmentwide strategic approach to real property management the Federal Real Property Council (FRPC) was established among the major real-property-holding agencies and chaired by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The FRPC partnership has provided a mechanism for establishing the $3 billion administration goal for savings related to improved real property management by the end of fiscal year 2012. OMB said that it has worked with agencies to list every agency's goal publicly and that agencies have listed data about the types of assets they have identified in their inventories.

OMB has reported that it will exceed the $3 billion goal, but has not provided sufficient data for us to validate this statement. Effective real property management continues to be hampered by underlying legal and budgetary-related limitations and competing stakeholder interests—two critical elements to identifying and eliminating waste within the real property portfolio. In addition, the federal government continues to overly rely on leasing to fulfill long-term needs when it would be more efficient in the long run to purchase or construct facilities. OMB officials said that tight spending limits have reduced agencies' abilities to invest in capital acquisitions, forcing agencies to choose short-term leases.

Status of Key Open Recommendations/Matters for Congressional Consideration

We recommended in 2007 that OMB in coordination with FRPC address key problems associated with disposing of unneeded real property, including reducing the effect of competing interests on real property decisions. OMB has partially addressed this recommendation by proposing the Civilian Property Realignment Act (CPRA) in 2011, which would create an independent board to assist agencies by bundling recommendations to dispose or consolidate multiple properties in various places. OMB staff said that the independent board would send the recommendations to Congress as part of a fast-track procedure meant to reduce competing interests that are inherent in proposals to dispose of single properties. The CPRA bill (H.R. 1734) passed the full House in February 2012. It was also introduced in the Senate (S.2232) but as of May 2012, it had not yet passed.

We recommended in 2008 that OMB in coordination with FRPC develop a strategy to reduce agencies' reliance on costly leasing where ownership would result in long-term savings. Although OMB did not include leasing challenges in its CPRA proposal, Congress has added it. The version of CRPA that passed the House and that was introduced in the Senate has included, among its purposes, reducing the government's reliance on leasing. OMB officials said that the administration's CPRA proposal would address both owned and leased assets. They also said that there are opportunities to consolidate agency leases and co-locate agency operations, but that OMB has only concurred with our assessment of overreliance on leasing in narrow circumstances.

Selected Reports

Federal Real Property: Progress Made on Planning and Data, but Unneeded Owned and Leased Facilities Remain. GAO-11-520T. Washington, D.C.: April 6, 2011.

Federal Real Property: Proposed Civilian Board Could Address Disposal of Unneeded Facilities. GAO-11-704T. Washington, D.C.: June 9, 2011.

Federal Real Property: Overreliance on Leasing Contributed to High-Risk Designation. GAO-11-879T. Washington, D.C.: August 4, 2011.

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