Background

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

GAO’s work supports a broad range of interests throughout Congress. In fiscal year 2014, GAO received requests for our work from 94 percent of the standing committees of Congress and almost 70 percent of their subcommittees. Additionally, senior GAO officials testified 129 times on a wide range of issues that touched virtually all major federal agencies. GAO remains one of the best investments in the federal government, and GAO’s dedicated staff continues to deliver high quality results. In fiscal year 2014 alone, GAO’s work yielded $54.4 billion in financial benefits—a return of about $100 for every dollar invested in GAO. Since fiscal year 2003, GAO’s work has resulted in:

- over ½ trillion dollars in financial benefits; and
- about 15,800 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public services, and promote sound management throughout government.

These results are a reflection of the dedication and hard work of GAO’s staff. GAO has again been recognized as an employer of choice, and continues to be ranked near the top on “best places to work” lists. In December 2014 the Partnership for Public Service ranked GAO second among mid-size agencies as one of the best places to work in the federal government.

Workforce and succession planning also remain a priority for GAO. In FY 2015, GAO plans to achieve a staffing level of 3,015 FTEs through a targeted recruiting strategy to address critical skills gaps. This is a positive step forward in rebuilding staff capacity which in recent years had fallen to the lowest level since 1935. The additional staff will help ensure GAO has the resources to assist Congress in improving government performance, effectiveness, and accountability, as well as support GAO’s commitment to service and quality. GAO’s limited investments in IT and building infrastructure will allow GAO to further streamline business operations, increase staff productivity, as well as improve access to information. Implementation will be done through a phased approach to reduce risk and ensure effective implementation.