

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-693](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Congress took steps to improve federal performance reporting through GPRAMA by requiring that OMB provide performance information via a publicly available central website, Performance.gov. In June 2013, GAO reported on the initial development of Performance.gov. GPRAMA includes a provision for GAO to periodically review its implementation. This report assesses OMB's (1) effort to ensure Performance.gov's usefulness, and (2) strategic plan for the website. GAO compared elements of Performance.gov to GSA's Digitalgov.gov requirements for federal websites. GAO summarized prior work on OMB's implementation of selected GPRAMA requirements. GAO also interviewed OMB, PIC, and GSA staff about recommendations GAO made on developing the website and Performance.gov's strategic plan.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations that OMB work with GSA and the PIC to 1) ensure the information presented on Performance.gov consistently complies with GPRAMA public reporting requirements for the website's content; 2) analyze and, where appropriate, implement usability test results to improve Performance.gov; and 3) develop a strategic plan for the future of Performance.gov that includes goals, objectives, and resources needed to meet website requirements; a customer outreach plan; and a strategy to manage and archive data. OMB staff agreed with GAO's recommendations and provided technical clarifications, which GAO incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-16-693](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

August 2016

PERFORMANCE.GOV

Long-Term Strategy Needed to Improve Website Usability

What GAO Found

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), General Services Administration (GSA), and the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) took several steps to improve the usefulness of Performance.gov, a website intended to serve as the public window to the federal government's goals and performance. However, their actions do not fully meet selected Digitalgov.gov requirements for federal websites (which are based on relevant statutes, regulations, and executive orders) and do not fully meet provisions of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA):

- In accordance with Digitalgov.gov, GSA, on behalf of OMB, issued a usability test in September 2013. The test identified issues with the website's accessibility, purpose, data visualizations, and search function. However, OMB and GSA have not addressed all of the test's findings.
- OMB and the PIC are tracking 18 of 24 website performance measures required by Digitalgov.gov, but have not set goals for those measures. In June 2013, GAO recommended they track measures and set goals for those measures. However, those recommendations remain open.
- OMB has not met all of the GPRAMA public reporting requirements for Performance.gov. In particular, GAO identified several areas where OMB is not fully meeting agency priority and cross-agency priority goal public reporting requirements. OMB and PIC staff told GAO they are aware that Performance.gov is not fully GPRAMA compliant, but in moving forward, are focused on ensuring its compliance.

According to OMB and PIC staff, limited resources have prevented them from taking actions to address the 2013 usability test and setting goals for measures. By not fully implementing Digitalgov.gov requirements and GAO's recommendations on GPRAMA requirements, Performance.gov will continue to have difficulty serving its intended purpose as a central website where users can easily locate government-wide performance information.

OMB does not have a strategic plan for the website that will help guide staff in the future. Specifically, OMB does not have a customer outreach strategy that incorporates, as appropriate, information about how OMB intends to (1) inform users of changes on Performance.gov, (2) use social media as a method of communication, and (3) use mobile devices and applications. OMB also lacks an archiving plan to retain data and content on Performance.gov. Agency-wide strategic planning practices required under law can serve as leading practices for planning at lower levels within federal agencies, such as individual programs or initiatives. Consistent with these practices, strategic plans should contain goals and objectives, approaches, and resources. OMB staff said they had not developed a strategic plan for Performance.gov because they wanted to allow transition time for the operations and website maintenance contractor hired in August 2015. OMB staff also said that, in February 2016, they hired a Digital Services Director to develop a strategic plan and manage the website's long-term development. Without a strategic plan, OMB will not know the resources it needs or the steps to take to meet requirements, and to ensure the site provides useful information to the public.