Improvements to IG Oversight Needed for Architect of the Capitol Operations

What GAO Found

During fiscal years 2012 through 2015—the 4-year period GAO reviewed—the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Office of Inspector General (OIG) had responsibilities for independent audits and investigations of AOC’s operations, and preservation of the buildings and grounds across Capitol Hill; construction and restoration projects, including its four largest ongoing “mega projects,” with an estimated combined cost of over $1 billion. The AOC OIG’s audit planning during this period did not include either risk assessments or assigned priorities for conducting audits consistent with standards of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). In addition, the OIG did not adopt these CIGIE standards in its policies and procedures. Instead, the current IG emphasized “continuous review” of mega projects, which he defined as an effort to alert AOC and the Congress of contract management issues as they occurred. This approach and the prior IG’s efforts did not result in any audit reports of AOC’s mega projects during fiscal years 2012 through 2015. The OIG also reported a decline in total audit reports and monetary accomplishments of potential dollar savings during fiscal years 2014 and 2015 (see table). Further, the OIG provided only one audit report of an AOC jurisdiction program during the 4-year period. Because of incomplete plans, a limited number of audit reports, and the lack of audit reports of AOC’s mega projects, AOC and the Congress did not have the full benefit of OIG findings and recommendations and were not kept fully and currently informed of possible AOC problems and deficiencies during the 4-year period.

In fiscal year 2014, the IG rescinded the OIG’s law enforcement authority and removed the OIG investigators’ responsibility to complete criminal investigations. Instead, the OIG’s investigators have responsibility for administrative investigations and rely primarily on the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) to perform criminal investigations, and on occasion other AOC program offices perform their own investigations. USCP and AOC program offices are not subject to CIGIE standards. The OIG is required to follow CIGIE standards for investigations. These OIG changes contributed in part to a decline in investigative reports and monetary accomplishments. The OIG has volunteered to receive a peer review of its investigations that could be expanded to include consideration of investigations by these other entities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Audit reports</th>
<th>Investigative reports</th>
<th>Other reports</th>
<th>Total monetary accomplishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,032,485</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>444,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>242,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$1,727,285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GAO analysis of Architect of the Capitol Office of Inspector General-reported data. | GAO-17-25