STATE AND ITS PARTNERS HAVE IMPLEMENTED SEVERAL ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES BUT COULD FURTHER REDUCE STAFF FRAUD RISKS

Why GAO Did This Study

According to UNHCR, as of the end of 2015, more than 21 million people had become refugees. In fiscal year 2016, the United States admitted nearly 85,000 refugees. State manages the U.S. refugee admissions program (USRAP), UNHCR referred 61 percent of the refugees considered by the United States for resettlement from October 2011 to June 2016, and State worked with staff hired by nine RSCs to process their applications. Deterring and detecting fraud is essential to ensuring the integrity of USRAP.

GAO examined (1) how State works with UNHCR to ensure program integrity in the UNHCR resettlement referral process and (2) the extent to which State and RSCs follow leading practices to reduce the risk of fraud committed by RSC staff. GAO analyzed State and UNHCR data and documents; interviewed relevant officials; conducted fieldwork at UNHCR offices in Denmark, El Salvador, Jordan, Kenya, and Switzerland; interviewed senior officials from all nine RSCs; and visited RSCs in Austria, Jordan, Kenya, and a suboffice in El Salvador. This report is based on GAO-17-446SU, with certain sensitive information removed.

What GAO Recommends

To better assess and manage risks of fraud committed by staff at RSCs, State should actively pursue efforts to ensure RSCs comply with program integrity measures; require each RSC to conduct regular risk assessments tailored to its operations; and use these assessments to design, implement, and revise control activities to mitigate risks of staff fraud. State agreed with GAO’s recommendations.

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