

Why GAO Did This Study

GSA is responsible for contracts that provide telecommunications services for federal agencies. In preparation for the expiration of current telecommunications programs, including one called Network, GSA has developed a successor program, known as EIS. GSA and agencies now must carry out the task of successfully transitioning to EIS contracts. Previous contract transitions experienced significant delays. Those delays during the transition to Network resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in missed savings.

GAO was asked to review agencies' EIS transition preparations. This report discusses (1) selected agencies' plans for, and status in, transitioning to EIS; and (2) the extent to which selected agencies were implementing established transition planning practices.

GAO administered a survey to 19 selected agencies that spent at least \$10 million on telecommunications in fiscal year 2018 regarding their plans for and status in transitioning to EIS. GAO also selected five of these agencies for further review—Commerce, HHS, NASA, State, and VA—based on, among other things, agency size and structure. For these agencies, GAO evaluated documentation to determine the extent to which they had implemented five planning practices identified in a previous GAO report.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making a total of 25 recommendations to Commerce, HHS, NASA, State, and VA, to fully implement the established transition planning practices. These agencies concurred with all of the recommendations.

View [GAO-20-155](#). For more information, contact Carol C. Harris at (202) 512-4456 or HarrisCC@gao.gov.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Agencies Should Fully Implement Established Transition Planning Practices to Help Reduce Risk of Costly Delays

What GAO Found

As of October 2019, the 19 selected agencies were in different stages of transitioning from their soon-to-be-expiring telecommunications contracts to the new Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) program. All of these agencies reported that they plan to fully transition to EIS before current contracts expire in May 2023. However, 11 agencies did not plan to fully transition by the General Services Administration's (GSA) September 30, 2022, milestone. The majority of the selected agencies also did not meet GSA's milestones for completing critical contracting actions in 2019 (see table). While transitioning to EIS is a complex undertaking, delaying this transition will cause agencies to miss potential cost savings that would result from the generally lower rates for services on EIS.

Nineteen Selected Agencies' Status In, and Plans for, Completing Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) Transition Activities by the General Services Administration's (GSA) Milestone Dates

EIS transition activity	GSA's milestone date to complete activity	Number of agencies that completed or plan to complete activity by GSA's milestone date	Number of agencies that did not or do not plan to complete activity by GSA's milestone date
Finish releasing all fair opportunity solicitations ^a	March 31, 2019	5	14
Finish issuing all task orders ^b	September 30, 2019	1	18
Fully transition services to EIS	September 30, 2022	8	11

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by agency officials. | GAO-20-155.

^aA solicitation is a request to submit offers or quotations to the government. Fair opportunity is a process in which each of the awardees under a multiple-award task order or delivery order (i.e., order for services or supplies, respectively) contract must be provided with a fair opportunity to be considered for each order exceeding \$3,500 issued under the contract, unless exceptions apply.

^bA task order is an order for services placed against an established task order contract.

Five selected agencies—the Departments of Commerce (Commerce), Health and Human Services (HHS), State (State), and Veterans Affairs (VA); and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)—had partially implemented established planning practices that can help agencies successfully transition their telecommunications services to new contracts. These practices are to: (1) develop an accurate inventory of telecommunications services, (2) perform a strategic analysis of telecommunications requirements, (3) develop a structured transition management approach, (4) identify the resources needed for the transition, and (5) develop a transition plan. The agencies provided several reasons for partially implementing the practices. For example, transition officials at Commerce, NASA, and VA said that they were not responsible for tracking all of the telecommunications services in use at their agencies; as such, they were unable to provide complete telecommunications inventories. The agencies also planned to implement certain practices after they issue their EIS task orders. However, the limited time remaining to complete the transition makes it critical that agencies conduct early planning with the information available and fully implement these transition planning practices to reduce the risk that the agencies experience the types of delays that occurred in previous transitions.