



Communicable Diseases: Transportation Security Administration Developed Its Required Preparedness Plan

GAO-25-107573 (Accessible Version)

Q&A

Report to Congressional Committees

April 9, 2025

Why This Matters

Global connectivity through air and other modes of transportation makes international travel easier but also can potentially expedite the spread of emerging communicable diseases. For example, air travel introduced both the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and COVID-19 to various regions of the world, the latter of which led to over a million deaths in the U.S. and cost trillions of dollars.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the primary federal agency with the mission of securing the nation's transportation systems, including air, rail, mass transit, and other modes of transportation. During a communicable disease outbreak, TSA is to ensure security is not compromised while minimizing disruptions across these modes. Further, the agency seeks to ensure the health and safety of passengers and its workforce of about 50,000 transportation security officers stationed across the nation's nearly 440 commercial airports.

TSA is one of several federal agencies with roles and responsibilities in preparing for, assessing, and responding to communicable disease threats in the aviation system. For example, the Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for developing a national aviation preparedness plan to address a communicable disease outbreak. This plan has yet to be published as of April 2025.

As required in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022 NDAA), TSA published the *Transportation Security Preparedness Plan to Address the Event of a Communicable Disease* (TSA preparedness plan) in February 2024 (Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2409-2411) (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)). The act also included a provision for us to assess the plan TSA developed. We are providing information on the TSA preparedness plan, including the extent to which it aligns with other federal plans and strategies and TSA's efforts to distribute and implement it.

Key Takeaways

- The TSA preparedness plan builds on other planning documents that TSA previously developed to prepare for a communicable disease outbreak.
- TSA shared information with us on steps it took to align its preparedness plan with other relevant federal plans and strategies, which included coordinating with various partners. We also identified examples of alignment between the TSA preparedness plan and other selected federal plans.
- TSA did not initially distribute its plan to its partners, including federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the TSA workforce, or the traveling public, as required by the FY 2022 NDAA. However, TSA acknowledged this oversight in response to our questions during our audit and subsequently distributed its plan to all partners.

- TSA has taken steps to implement its preparedness plan, including updating field component guidance and plans to conduct exercises.

What is the purpose of the TSA preparedness plan?

The stated purpose of the TSA preparedness plan is to support the protection of the transportation security sector's workforce and maintain essential functions and services. This is to be accomplished by supporting and advising federal agencies on transportation security matters in response to a communicable disease outbreak. Further, it defines TSA's capabilities for minimizing transmission of a communicable disease between the TSA workforce and the traveling public.

How does the TSA preparedness plan relate to other TSA planning documents?

The TSA preparedness plan builds on several planning documents that the agency previously developed, including the *Chemical/Biological and Pandemic Base Plan* (base plan) and its *Communicable Disease Response Playbook* (COVID-19 playbook), to prepare for a communicable disease outbreak.¹ TSA field components, including commercial airports, also have tactical response plans pertaining to communicable disease outbreaks.

Base plan. In 2017, TSA first published its base plan that was required by DHS and TSA policies.² The base plan, last updated in 2022, includes activities that TSA should implement during a potential chemical or biological incident or a pandemic, which can include a communicable disease outbreak. TSA officials told us the agency primarily relies on its base plan for a range of preparedness and response activities both at its headquarters and in the field.

In developing the TSA preparedness plan, officials told us that they took relevant parts of the base plan and expanded on the parts that are specific to a communicable disease outbreak. However, they decided not to include details on other processes and procedures to avoid repetition of tactical planning information in the base plan. For example, the base plan includes more details on using personal protective equipment under routine operations versus health emergency conditions that are included in the preparedness plan.













Tactical response plans. In addition to agencywide plans, the base plan requires that TSA field components, including commercial airports, have their own tactical response plans to manage a potential pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. TSA officials stated that the TSA preparedness plan is a more overarching guidance document for headquarters and does not have the same level of detail as the tactical response plans for the field.

To ensure field component tactical response plans reflect headquarters plans, TSA developed a template for field officials to use when updating their tactical response plans, according to officials. TSA requires its airport personnel to update these tactical response plans annually to reflect changes made in the template. For example, officials stated that the template was updated to include requirements described in the TSA preparedness plan. These plans provide actionable guidance to front-line TSA employees, including transportation security officers, who may be exposed to communicable diseases while carrying out their normal duties.

COVID-19 playbook. In 2020, TSA developed a COVID-19 playbook that provides examples of mitigation activities that TSA used during the COVID-19 pandemic and offers lessons learned for future communicable disease outbreaks.³ The playbook lists four public health strategies aimed at minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases by: (1) minimizing touch during the screening process, (2) increasing social distance, (3) enhancing cleaning of checkpoints, and (4) requiring the use of personal protective equipment. The playbook also describes challenges associated with each strategy. TSA incorporated and referenced elements of the COVID-19 playbook in the preparedness plan.

Figure 1 provides an overview of TSA's plans to prepare for a communicable disease outbreak.

Figure 1: TSA Plans Related to Preparedness for a Communicable Disease Event

TSA plan title	Year issued	Plan type	Update frequency	Required by
Transportation Security Preparedness Plan to Address the Event of a Communicable Disease	2024	Overarching 	Biennially 	Statute ^a 
TSA Incident Management Framework Chemical/Biological and Pandemic (Base plan)	2017 ^b (last updated 2022)	Operational 	Biennially 	DHS 
Tactical response plans	Varies by airport	Tactical 	Annually 	Base plan 
Communicable Disease Response Playbook: Solutions and Best Practices for Mitigation (COVID-19 playbook)	2020	Tactical 	As needed 	Not required 



Overarching - a supplemental plan intended to assist with other planning efforts, generally at the agency headquarters level.



Operational - a broad plan that describes roles and responsibilities, tasks, and other expectations of an organization during incidents.



Tactical - a narrow plan that focuses on managing resources such as personnel and equipment that play a direct role in an incident or event.

Source: GAO review of federal law; analysis of Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information; interviews with TSA officials; GAO icons. | GAO-25-107573

^aNational Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2410-2411 (2021) (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)(1), (5)).

^bTSA published its initial base plan in 2014, called the *Pandemic Workforce Protection Plan*. In 2017, this plan was revised and renamed the *Chemical/Biological and Pandemic Base Plan*.

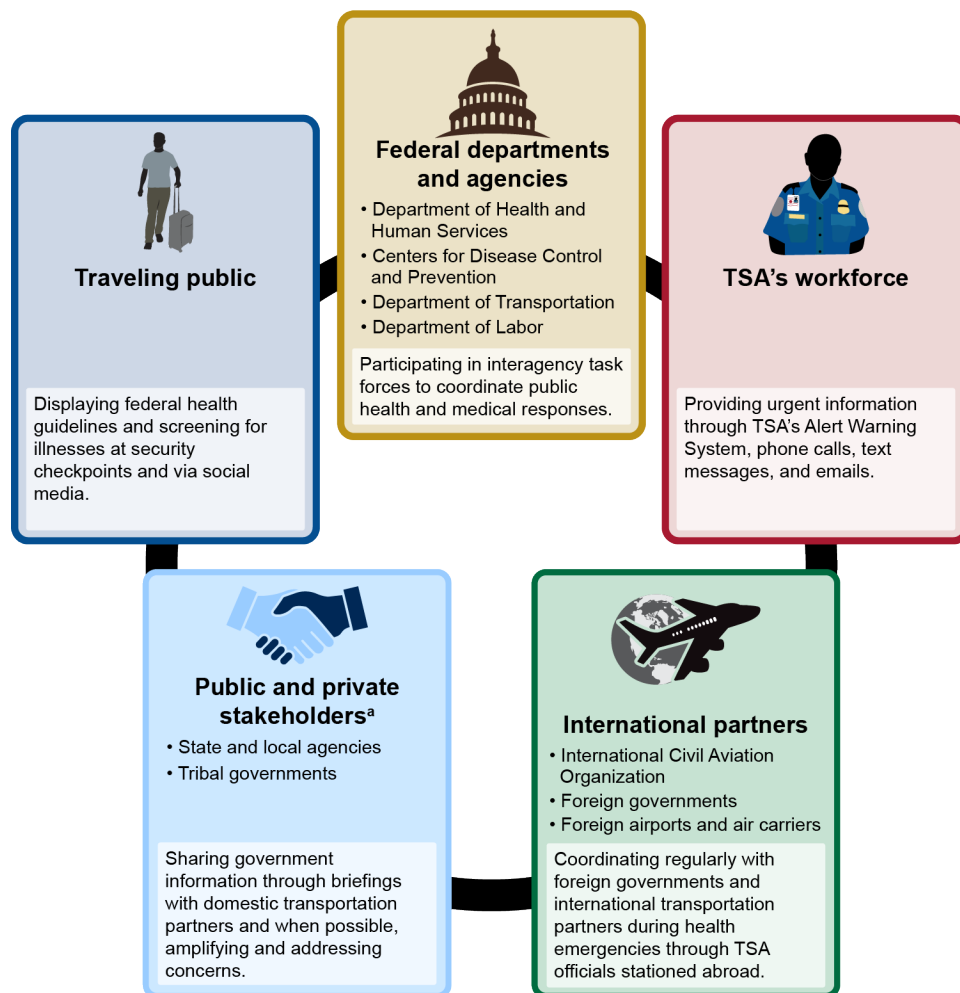
Who does TSA plan to communicate and collaborate with during a communicable disease outbreak?

The FY 2022 NDAA requires TSA to include plans to communicate and collaborate with five types of partners in their preparedness plan. These partners are federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public.⁴ TSA includes examples of communication and collaboration activities in its preparedness plan:

- Communicating urgent information to its workforce through TSA's alert warning system, phone calls, text messages, and emails
- Collaborating with domestic transportation partners by holding government response briefings
- Collaborating with international transportation partners, (e.g., governments and air carriers in other countries).

Figure 2 provides examples of how TSA communicates and collaborates with these five types of partners.

Figure 2: Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Partners and Examples of How TSA Plans to Communicate and Collaborate with Them in the Event of a Communicable Disease Outbreak



Source: GAO review of federal law and TSA information; GAO icons. | GAO-25-107573

Note: Per statute, TSA is required to include plans to communicate and collaborate with five types of partners in its preparedness plan including federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2410 (citing 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)(3)(A)).

^aPublic and private stakeholders include, state and local agencies, tribal governments, and other private entities. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2410 (citing 49 U.S.C. § 114(t)(1)(C)).

What steps did TSA take to align its preparedness plan with other federal plans?

To align the TSA preparedness plan with other federal plans and strategies, TSA reviewed documents, spoke with officials at several federal agencies, and requested feedback from these agencies on a draft of the TSA preparedness

plan, according to TSA documents and officials. According to officials, these steps allowed TSA to understand other agency practices and how best to align the TSA preparedness plan to the roles and responsibilities in existing federal plans and strategies.

Reviewed relevant documentation. According to TSA documents and officials, the agency reviewed approximately 80 documents, including related plans from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Departments of Health and Human Services and the Interior. TSA also reviewed various reports from organizations such as GAO, the Congressional Research Service, the International Epidemiological Association, and the International Air Transport Association.

Spoke with other federal agency officials. TSA officials told us they held conference calls with various agencies, including DOT, Health and Human Services, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the DHS Office of Health Security. According to TSA meeting minutes, the conference calls covered a range of topics related to the development of the preparedness plan. For example, agency officials discussed their agency's plans and guidance for communicable disease outbreaks and how they planned to communicate with other agencies and the transportation sector.

Requested feedback on a draft of the plan. TSA officials said that they shared a draft of the preparedness plan with certain federal agencies that they met with earlier in the development stages of the preparedness plan. According to TSA officials, the agency officials reviewed the preparedness plan to help ensure their agencies' roles and responsibilities aligned with the agencies' efforts to address a communicable disease outbreak.

How does the TSA preparedness plan align with other federal plans in terms of communication and collaboration?






We found examples of alignment between the TSA preparedness plan and other federal planning documents we selected. To determine alignment, we reviewed the portions of TSA's plan that relate to communicating and collaborating with the five types of partners identified in the statute: federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public.⁵

We compared information in the TSA preparedness plan with information on communicating and collaborating in the following three federal planning documents:

- Department of Homeland Security Pandemic and Emerging Infectious Diseases Workforce Protection Plan (DHS workforce protection plan),
- Department of Health and Human Services Pandemic Crisis Action Plan Adapted U.S. Government COVID-19 Response Plan (HHS COVID-19 plan), and
- White House Biodefense Strategy (national biodefense strategy).

Figure 3 highlights examples of alignment between communication and collaboration efforts in the TSA preparedness plan and similar efforts in other federal planning documents, including the national biodefense strategy.

Figure 3: Examples of Alignment Between the TSA Preparedness Plan and Three Federal Planning Documents

TSA partner	Examples of communication or collaboration in the TSA preparedness plan	Examples of communication and collaboration in three other federal planning documents
<div>Federal departments and agencies</div> <div></div>	The plan states that the early establishment of a joint information center is critical for interagency coordination.	The DHS workforce protection plan, HHS COVID-19 plan, and White House biodefense strategy discuss the importance of establishing a joint information center, or an interagency entity to coordinate and share information with the public and media.
<div>TSA's workforce</div> <div></div>	The plan describes ways to communicate with its employees, including shift briefs, virtual or in-person town halls, social media posts, or conference calls. For more urgent communication, TSA could use the Alert Warning System to share messages and account for its workforce, along with phone calls, texts, and e-mail.	The DHS workforce protection plan states that leaders may use existing communications means, such as shift briefs, video messages, text messages, and conference calls to communicate to employees during an incident.
<div>International partners</div> <div></div>	The plan states TSA will use relationships with the International Civil Aviation Organization, foreign air carriers, and foreign governments for global outreach to adopt effective mitigation measures to combat an outbreak.	The DHS workforce protection plan states that DHS will use existing international relationships to receive, share, and integrate information to protect the workforce before, during, and after a biological incident.
<div>Public and private stakeholders^a</div> <div></div>	The plan states that TSA will serve as an information sharing source during an outbreak. As such, TSA may initiate and lead sector coordination calls that affect the security of airlines, airports, or other transportation modes.	The White House biodefense strategy discusses establishing multi-sectoral groups that include state and local, as well as private sector partners to address policy issues.
<div>Traveling public</div> <div></div>	The plan states that the HHS Secretary or designee serves as the primary spokesperson for outreach related to public health.	The HHS COVID-19 plan states that HHS is the lead federal agency for public outreach.

Source: GAO analysis of Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and White House information; GAO icons. | GAO-25-107573

Note: To determine alignment, we reviewed the portions of TSA's plans that relate to communicating and collaborating with its five types of partners. Per statute, TSA is required to include plans to communicate and collaborate with five types of partners in its preparedness plan: federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2410 (citing 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)(3)(A)).

^aPublic and private stakeholders include, state and local agencies, tribal governments, and other private entities. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2410 (citing 49 U.S.C. § 114(t)(1)(C)).

How does the TSA preparedness plan relate to the forthcoming DOT national aviation preparedness plan?

The TSA preparedness plan is intended to complement the forthcoming DOT national aviation preparedness plan for communicable disease outbreaks, according to TSA officials. Following our recommendations to DOT in 2015 and to Congress in 2020, Congress required DOT to develop a national aviation preparedness plan.⁶

TSA officials stated that they coordinated with DOT while developing the TSA preparedness plan and reviewed a draft of the DOT national aviation plan. Based on the version they reviewed, the TSA officials stated that each plan has a

different purpose. According to TSA officials, DOT's forthcoming plan is intended to help prevent an infectious disease from being transmitted into the United States from an international source, among other things, whereas the TSA preparedness plan focuses on the protection of its workforce and the traveling public. TSA officials stated that they plan to review the national aviation preparedness plan once published to ensure the TSA preparedness plan remains complementary.

Did TSA distribute the preparedness plan to its partners?

TSA distributed the preparedness plan to all its partners 10 months after its publication in February 2024. TSA is statutorily required to distribute the preparedness plan to appropriate federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public.⁷ Initially, we found that the agency did not distribute the plan more widely to its other federal and nonfederal partners because they overlooked the FY 2022 NDAA's distribution requirement. As a result, the plan was not available on TSA's public-facing website, and TSA's partners were expected to request it from TSA, according to TSA officials.

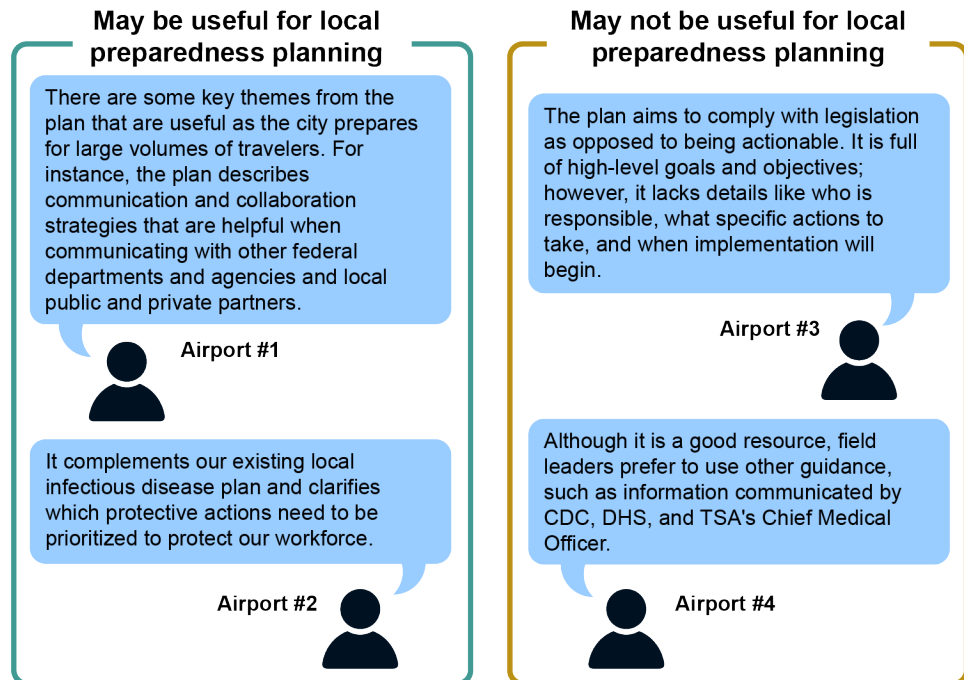
TSA acknowledged this oversight in response to our questions about the agency's efforts to distribute the plan, and by the end of December 2024, TSA took steps to distribute the plan to all its partners. These steps included posting the plan on TSA's public-facing website, as well as sharing the plan with partner agencies through DHS's Homeland Security Information Network and sending the plan directly to other partners like the International Civil Aviation Organization, according to TSA officials.

Further, TSA officials told us they distributed the plan internally among TSA leadership when the plan was initially published, as required by TSA's executive process for sharing publications. Officials also stated that they posted the plan on the agency's intranet for the rest of their workforce, including TSA airport employees.

However, some TSA airport officials we contacted had limited awareness of the preparedness plan. In September 2024, we contacted TSA officials at four airports: Baltimore-Washington International, Dallas Fort Worth International, Detroit Metropolitan, and Seattle-Tacoma International. TSA officials at two of the four airports said they were only aware of the plan as a result of our inquiry. TSA officials at the other two airports said they became aware of the plan as they searched for additional TSA guidance on the agency's intranet in preparation for local planning activities.

After reviewing the TSA preparedness plan, the airport officials had varying perspectives on whether it was useful for their local planning purposes. TSA officials at two of the airports told us they found the preparedness plan may be useful for their planning purposes, while officials at the other two airports found that it may not be useful. Figure 4 highlights selected perspectives from the officials at these four airports.

Figure 4: Examples of Perspectives of TSA Officials at Selected Airports on the Usefulness of the TSA Preparedness Plan for Addressing a Communicable Disease Event



CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

TSA Transportation Security Administration

DHS Department of Homeland Security

Source: GAO summary of TSA information. | GAO-25-107573

Note: We contacted TSA officials at four airports to understand their knowledge of the preparedness plan at the field component level and whether they found the plan useful. We selected the airports based on international passenger traffic and geographic dispersion. The responses above summarize the perspectives of the officials and are not generalizable to all TSA airport officials.

What steps is TSA taking to implement the plan?

TSA has taken initial steps to implement the preparedness plan, including developing exercises for its preparedness plan. In July 2024, TSA updated its template for the tactical response plans to integrate elements of the preparedness plan, to help ensure airports adhere to it. For example, TSA officials stated that one of the changes prompted by the preparedness plan directs airports to update their response plans to include procedures for maintaining stocks of masks, hand sanitizers, gloves, and disinfectant to support operations for up to 30 days. According to TSA officials, airport personnel are to conduct annual tabletop exercises of their tactical response plans. In addition, officials stated that field components are to revise all tactical response plans to reflect the updated template by the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025.

In October 2024, TSA headquarters officials told us they expect to incorporate the preparedness plan into the TSA training and exercise cycle, which is to occur every 3 years. TSA headquarters officials stated that the agency intends to exercise the TSA preparedness plan by the end of 2025. These officials stated that their priority is to exercise plans pertaining to more urgent threats first, including cyber and drone attacks.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DHS for review and comment. DHS provided technical comments that we incorporated as appropriate.

How GAO Did This Study

To inform all our work, we reviewed the FY 2022 NDAA requirements, the TSA preparedness plan, and other guidance documents related to TSA's preparation for a communicable disease, including the TSA base plan and TSA COVID-19 playbook. We also interviewed TSA officials in headquarters and contacted field officials who were knowledgeable about the preparedness plan.

To describe the steps TSA took to align its preparedness plan with other federal plans and strategies, we assessed documentation of steps TSA took to review similar federal plans and strategies and to collaborate with relevant partners as it developed the preparedness plan. This documentation included minutes from meetings TSA held with other agencies and a list of preparedness plans and reports that TSA reviewed while developing the preparedness plan. We also interviewed TSA officials to understand the process to develop the preparedness plan and ensure it aligned with other plans across the federal government.

To identify examples of alignment between the TSA preparedness plan and other federal plans and strategies, we compared TSA's plan to three federal planning documents:

- Department of Homeland Security's *Pandemic and Emerging Infectious Disease Workforce Protection Plan*, which we selected because it is similarly focused on workforce protection
- Department of Health and Human Services' *Pandemic Crisis Action Plan Adapted U.S. Government COVID-19 Response Plan*, which we selected because HHS was a key agency in the United States' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a recent communicable disease requiring a whole of government response
- *White House National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan*, which we selected because it is national level guidance intended to coordinate the U.S. Government's efforts to assess, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from biological threats.

To determine alignment, we reviewed the portions of TSA's plan that relate to communicating and collaborating with its five types of partners: federal departments and agencies, TSA's workforce, international partners, public and private stakeholders, and the traveling public. GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* states that entities should internally and externally communicate the necessary quality information to achieve their objectives, which can be done using established reporting lines. Further, in our prior work on interagency collaboration, we broadly define collaboration as any joint activity that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the entities act alone.⁸

We determined the description in TSA's preparedness plan of how the agency would communicate and collaborate with its five required partners aligned when the descriptions of these activities in other federal plans were similarly stated. In each document, we looked for intentions that were clearly defined, logically sequenced, and not in conflict, to include in limited circumstances.

To describe the distribution and implementation of the TSA preparedness plan, we reviewed relevant TSA documents, including guidance for airports to develop and update their tactical response plans. We also reviewed tactical response plans at four airports: Baltimore-Washington International, Dallas Fort Worth International, Detroit Metropolitan, and Seattle-Tacoma International. We judgmentally selected these four airports to reflect a range of characteristics, such as airports that reported high numbers of international passengers annually and were in different geographic regions that varied in administrative

responsibility. The plans at these airports are illustrative and cannot be generalized to the tactical plans at all airports.

We interviewed or obtained written responses from officials in TSA headquarters and in the field to understand the distribution and implementation of the TSA preparedness plan. For instance, we asked officials about TSA's process to distribute the plan to its five types of partners, as required by the FY 2022 NDAA, and plans for training TSA staff on the preparedness plan. In addition, we contacted airport officials from August 2024 to December 2024 to ask about their awareness of and whether they found the preparedness plan useful for their local planning purposes. These perspectives are illustrative and cannot be generalized to TSA officials at all airports.

We conducted this performance audit from May 2024 to April 2025 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

List of Addressees

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate

The Honorable Mark E. Green, M.D.
Chairman
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
House of Representatives

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

GAO Contact Information

For more information, contact: Tina Won Sherman, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, ShermanT@gao.gov.

Public Affairs: Sarah Kaczmarek, Managing Director, Media@gao.gov.

Congressional Relations: A. Nicole Clowers, Managing Director, CongRel@gao.gov.

Staff Acknowledgments: Paul Hobart (Assistant Director), Dainia Lawes (Analyst in Charge), Erika Cubilo, Kyle O'Brien, Paul Aussendorf, Lauri Barnes, Ben Crossley, Janet Temko-Blinder, Dierdre Brown, Jonathan Carver, Hayden Huang, Susan Murphy, Leah Nash, Di'Mond Spencer, Rebecca Sero, Mary Turgeon, Sarah Veale, and Sarah Williamson.

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Endnotes

¹TSA, *Transportation Security Preparedness Plan to Address the Event of a Communicable Disease*, (Feb. 2024); *Incident Management Framework, Chemical/Biological and Pandemic Base Plan*, (Jul. 2022); *TSA Communicable Disease Response Playbook: Solutions and Best Practices for Mitigation*, (Sept. 2020).

²TSA published the initial plan in 2014, called the *Pandemic Workforce Protection Plan*. In 2017, this plan was revised and renamed the *Chemical/Biological and Pandemic Base Plan*, as required by TSA's *Incident Management Framework* and DHS's *Pandemic and Emerging Infectious Disease Workforce Protection Plan*, (May 6, 2022).

³In September 2020, TSA issued the *TSA Communicable Disease Response Playbook: Solutions and Best Practices for Mitigation* (Version 4). For the purposes of this report, we refer to this document as the "COVID-19 Playbook" because TSA officials we met with often referred to it as such due to its particular relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴Pub. L. No. 117-81, § 6412(a), 135 Stat. 1541, 2409 (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)(3)(A)).

⁵When we determined that steps in the TSA preparedness plan to communicate or collaborate with its five types of partners were similarly stated in the other federal planning documents, we identified these as examples of alignment. We looked for planned communication activities that intended to establish reporting lines for sharing information to achieve objectives. In this case, the objectives are to protect TSA's workforce and carry out essential mission functions in the event of a communicable disease event. For collaboration, we looked for planned joint activities intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the partners act alone.

⁶GAO, *COVID-19: Opportunities to Improve Federal Response and Recovery Efforts*, GAO-20-625 (Washington, D.C.: Jun. 25, 2020) and *Air Travel and Communicable Diseases: Comprehensive Federal Plan Needed for U.S. Aviation System's Preparedness*, GAO-16-127 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 16, 2015). We also noted that the absence of a national plan undermines the ability of the public health and aviation sectors to coordinate on a response or to provide consistent guidance to airlines and airports. Also see GAO, *Commercial Aviation: Key Lessons from COVID-19 Preparedness and Emergency Financial Assistance to the Industry*, GAO-24-106754 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 18, 2024). Further, DOT was required by statute to complete the plan by December 29, 2024. See Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-328, Div. Q, § 105(a), 136 Stat. 4459, 5253 (2022). We confirmed with federal aviation officials that the plan is in the review stage, as of April 2025. Officials reported that the plan will include a framework to coordinate among federal agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as other appropriate federal, state, and local entities. We expect to conduct a detailed review of the plan after DOT completes it.

⁷§ 6412(a) at 2409 (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 114(x)(4)). The statute specifies that the appropriate federal department and agencies include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor, and appropriate interagency task forces. Further, the statute specifies that international partners include the International Civil Aviation Organization and foreign governments, airports, and air carriers. It also states that public and private stakeholders comprise federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments, and appropriate private entities, including nonprofit employee labor organizations representing transportation employees. 49 U.S.C. § 114(t)(1)(1).

⁸In our prior work on leading collaboration practices, we found that interagency collaboration involves collaboration among two or more federal entities. The term *collaboration* broadly refers to interagency activities that others have defined as *cooperation*, *coordination*, *integration*, or *networking*. There are no commonly accepted definitions for these terms. For the purposes of this work, we are not drawing distinctions among them. See GAO, *Government Performance Management: Leading Practices to Enhance Interagency Collaboration and Address Crosscutting Challenges*, GAO-23-105520 (Washington, D.C.: May 24, 2023).