

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-105361](#), a report to the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

FPS is responsible for protecting approximately 9,000 federal facilities across the country and the millions of people who visit or work in them. FPS's organizational placement has changed several times since its formation in 1971. GAO reported in [GAO-19-122](#) that any organizational placement for FPS could result in benefits and tradeoffs.

GAO was asked to review the impact FPS's 2019 placement in the Management Directorate has had on FPS's activities. This report examines (1) the benefits and challenges of FPS's placement in the Management Directorate and (2) FPS's performance measures for critical activities.

GAO focused on seven critical activities performed by FPS. These activities were selected because they had the highest cost in fiscal year 2020 and are key issues, among other reasons. GAO reviewed documentation and interviewed officials from FPS and the FPS employee union, and the Management Directorate. GAO compared actions taken to leading practices for collaboration and for measuring agency performance.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending (1) that the Management Directorate's human capital office and FPS strengthen mechanisms to facilitate collaboration on hiring processes, and (2) that FPS fully develop performance measures with targets for each of its strategic objectives. DHS agreed with the recommendations.

View [GAO-23-105361](#). For more information, contact Catina B. Latham at (202) 512-2834 or lathamc@gao.gov.

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FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

More Collaboration on Hiring and Additional Performance Information Needed

What GAO Found

In 2019, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) moved to the Management Directorate, an office in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that oversees and supports budget, human capital, and other business functions. FPS officials cited multiple benefits of this move, including improved support from leadership and improved coordination with certain Management Directorate offices. Additionally, officials said FPS has gained credibility among DHS agencies as FPS is more involved in security operations since moving to the Management Directorate.

However, FPS's long-standing challenges in managing human capital have not yet been resolved since its placement in the Management Directorate. In particular, FPS had a staffing shortage of 21 percent at the end of fiscal year 2021. These staffing challenges persist in part because FPS and the Management Directorate's human capital office have not sufficiently collaborated on hiring processes. Mechanisms to facilitate further collaboration and agreement on hiring processes and to document the agreements reached could help the human capital office and FPS more effectively and efficiently address FPS's staffing shortages.

DHS and FPS have performance measures and targets for some of the critical activities GAO selected for review (see table). However, FPS has not established performance measures for information technology management and training for FPS officials. Instead, FPS identified initiatives that will help it achieve the related strategic objectives of modernizing the FPS infrastructure and developing the FPS workforce.

Performance Measures and Targets for Selected Federal Protective Service (FPS) Activities

Selected FPS critical activities	Performance measure(s) identified?	Target(s) established?
Facility security assessments	Yes	Yes
Contract guard management	Yes	Yes
Law enforcement response, policing and patrol	Yes	Partially
Information sharing and coordination	Yes	No
Human capital management	Yes	No
Information technology management	No	No
Training for FPS officials	No	No

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2021 Congressional Budget Justification and Federal Protective Service strategic plan for fiscal years 2022-2026. | [GAO-23-105361](#)

FPS also has not established targets for several of the performance measures it identified for other critical activities; these targets would enable FPS to compare actual results against planned performance. FPS officials said that, as of October 2022, FPS was in the process of collecting data to determine appropriate targets for these performance measures, but that this effort was taking longer than expected. Developing performance measures with targets would provide FPS with performance information that could help FPS more fully measure program performance and understand the extent to which FPS is achieving its objectives within the Management Directorate. Performance measures with targets could also facilitate the oversight of FPS by the Management Directorate.