

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-106](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

Federal agencies annually invest over \$80 billion on IT. As part of overseeing this spending, OMB directs federal CIOs to report on their management of IT in such areas as capital planning and investment management, security, and strategic planning.

GAO was asked to review the usefulness of such CIO reporting requirements. Its objectives were to (1) identify the current IT reporting requirements that agency CIOs are to address for OMB, (2) evaluate the extent to which OMB and agency CIOs use the required information to manage IT, including CIOs' views on the utility of the requirements, and (3) assess any OMB efforts to streamline this reporting. To do so, GAO analyzed OMB memorandums and other guidance to develop a list of CIO requirements and surveyed 24 major agency CIOs on how they used the required information to manage IT. Further, it analyzed OMB documentation and interviewed officials to identify plans to streamline reporting.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that OMB, in collaboration with CIOs, ensure a common understanding of priority IT reforms and their reporting requirements and address proposed reporting improvements and challenges. OMB neither agreed nor disagreed with GAO's recommendations, citing concerns with, among other things, GAO's survey methodology, stating it did not fully support the report's findings and recommendations. GAO believes these concerns are largely unfounded and that its recommendations are still valid.

View [GAO-15-106](#). For more information, contact David A. Powner at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.

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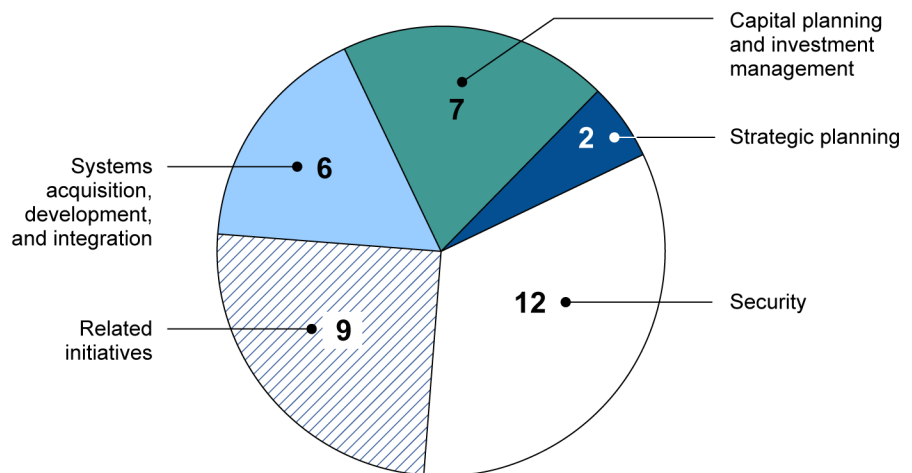
FEDERAL CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS

Reporting to OMB Can Be Improved by Further Streamlining and Better Focusing on Priorities

What GAO Found

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directs agency chief information officers (CIO) to respond to 36 information technology (IT) management reporting requirements, largely on a quarterly or annual basis, that address several areas key to effective IT management (see figure).

Number of Requirements per Key IT Management Area



Source: GAO analysis. | GAO-15-106

OMB uses the information reported by CIOs to help it oversee the federal government's use of IT, including implementation of OMB's IT reform initiatives such as consolidating data centers and eliminating duplication. A majority of 24 CIOs surveyed that responded reported that 24 of the 36 reporting requirements help only to some to no extent in managing IT and that meeting them took significant effort and cost approximately \$150 million to \$308 million annually. A number of CIOs further noted that these requirements were not always helpful because, among other things, addressing them did not support agency priorities. Nonetheless, GAO has previously emphasized the importance of OMB's reforms and their associated reporting requirements to improving federal IT management and producing savings. Thus it is concerning that CIOs do not always see value in reporting information essential to these reforms. Establishing a common understanding between OMB and CIOs on the priority of these initiatives and their related reporting requirements will help ensure their success.

OMB has taken steps to streamline CIO reporting requirements, such as changing reporting formats from narratives to performance data. Nonetheless, OMB's efforts do not address challenges identified by CIOs, such as tracking all current requirements and having to use multiple online tools to report information. This is partly because OMB has not solicited feedback in these areas, due to its focus on streamlining reporting in other areas. By not addressing these challenges, OMB is missing opportunities to help CIOs improve the requirements reporting process and its use of information collected to effectively manage and oversee federal IT.