

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-384](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The federal security workforce plays a crucial role in meeting the growing challenges of protecting federal facilities. FPS, within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), worked with NPPD to develop a staffing model and a *Plan* in 2013 and 2015 to help FPS manage its workforce. A 2015 Senate Appropriations Committee report included a provision for GAO to review the *Plan*. The committee also asked GAO to evaluate the staffing model. GAO examined (1) FPS's *Plan* and related human capital planning efforts and (2) how FPS designed and uses its staffing model. GAO assessed FPS's *Plan* and model to determine if they aligned with key workforce-planning principles and practices for designing staffing models. GAO identified these principles and practices from prior work and other sources. GAO also interviewed NPPD and FPS officials in headquarters and three regions selected to obtain regional variation such as in the number of FPS staff.

What GAO Recommends

To improve FPS's human capital planning, GAO recommends that the Secretary of DHS direct NPPD and FPS to identify time frames for developing performance measures with targets that are explicitly aligned to FPS's goals, establish a plan and time frames for updating its staffing model, and develop and document guidance for ensuring the quality of staffing model data. DHS concurred with GAO's recommendations and outlined steps it plans to take to address them.

View [GAO-16-384](#). For more information, contact Lori Rectanus at (202) 512-2834 or rectanusl@gao.gov.

March 2016

FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Enhancements to Performance Measures and Data Quality Processes Could Improve Human Capital Planning

What GAO Found

The Federal Protective Service (FPS)—which protects about 9,500 federal facilities—developed a *Strategic Human Capital Plan (Plan)* and engaged in related efforts that generally align with most key principles GAO identified for strategic workforce planning. Specifically, FPS

- solicited input from key stakeholders, such as its employees and the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD)—FPS's parent organization responsible for managing and overseeing FPS's human capital efforts;
- determined critical skills and competencies;
- developed human capital strategies (i.e., programs, policies, and processes) tailored to address identified gaps and needs in its workforce; and
- identified actions that build the organizational capability to support the strategies.

However, FPS has not fully developed performance measures to evaluate progress toward goals, which is also a key principle for strategic workforce planning. For example, FPS has not identified performance measures for all of the *Plan*'s strategies, has not included targets for the identified performance measures (e.g., a desired target for the "attrition rate" measure), and has not linked the measures to FPS's human capital goals. GAO's work on measuring program performance has found that targets and linkages are among the attributes of successful performance measures. FPS and NPPD officials said they plan on developing measures with targets and linkages but have not yet established time frames for completing these tasks. Without performance measures that have targets and linkages, it will be difficult for NPPD and FPS to assess whether the *Plan* and related efforts are helping achieve FPS's human capital goals and its facility protection mission.

FPS designed its staffing model—which identifies the federal workforce the agency needs to meet its mission—consistent with most key practices GAO identified for the design of staffing models, and FPS uses the model to help make management decisions. Specifically, FPS's model includes:

- work activities and the time required to perform them;
- facility risk levels, which determine the frequency with which FPS must complete facility security assessments; and
- input from key stakeholders, including NPPD and some regional officials.

FPS officials said they took steps, such as reviewing work hour estimates, to ensure the quality of data used in the model—another key practice. FPS currently uses the model to help make human capital planning and other management decisions, but NPPD and FPS have not identified time frames for updating the model since its last update in August 2013. Furthermore, FPS cannot assure data quality in future updates to the model because it has no documented process for ensuring data quality. Without time frames for updating the model and guidance on ensuring data quality, NPPD and FPS may not have accurate estimates of staffing needs to make management decisions.