

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-17-616](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government produces thousands of plans and reports each year to meet the informational needs of Congress. GPRAMA established a process to eliminate or modify reports that may be outdated or duplicative.

GAO was asked to examine OMB and agencies' implementation of GPRAMA provisions to identify unnecessary reports and develop proposals to eliminate or modify them as appropriate. GAO's objectives were to (1) review agencies' report modification proposals, (2) assess the extent to which OMB and agencies implemented related GPRAMA requirements, and (3) describe how selected federal agencies determined which plans and reports are outdated or duplicative.

To address these objectives, GAO reviewed agencies report modification proposals, relevant laws, OMB guidance, and agency documents. GAO interviewed staff from Congress, OMB, and six selected agencies. Agencies were selected based on the number of proposals they published. GAO reviewed selected agencies' complete list of reports and internal guidance, and analyzed the contents of their report modification proposals.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that OMB submit or reference report modification proposals with the President's annual budget, and ensure that email instructions to agencies align with GPRAMA and Circular A-11 guidance. OMB staff agreed with the recommendations.

View [GAO-17-616](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

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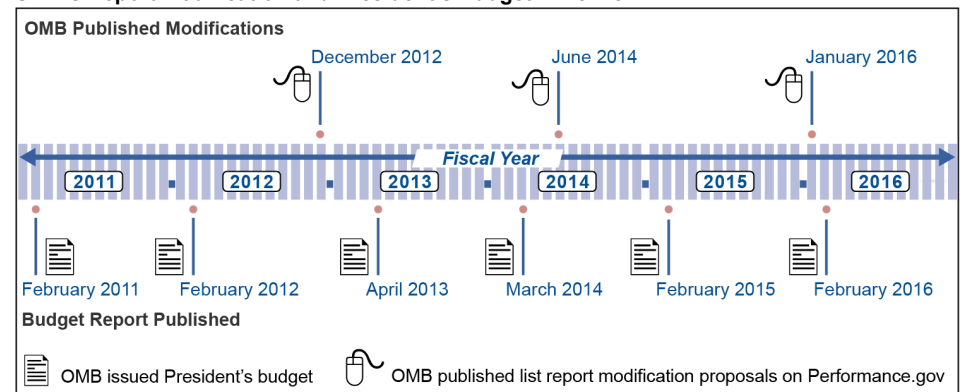
OMB and Agencies Should More Fully Implement the Process to Streamline Reporting Requirements

What GAO Found

The GPRAMA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to coordinate an annual review of agencies' plans and reports for Congress and publish proposals to eliminate or modify reports that may be outdated or duplicative. Since the passage of GPRAMA, OMB posted three lists of proposals (in 2012, 2014, and 2016) on Performance.gov. These lists contained a total of 523 new proposals. In 2014, Congress acted on agencies' report modification proposals by eliminating 51 reporting requirements, including 34 that were identified through this process.

As shown in the figure, GAO found that OMB did not implement the report modification process on an annual basis, as required by GPRAMA. OMB staff said that they implemented the report modification process every other year because reporting requirements are relatively static. OMB staff said, in future years, they plan to implement the process annually as required.

OMB's Report Modification and President's Budget Timeline



Source: GAO analysis of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) publication dates. GAO | 17-616

GAO also found that OMB is publishing agencies' proposals on Performance.gov, rather than in the President's annual budget as GPRAMA requires. OMB staff said that they published the proposals online rather than in the budget because the website hosts many GPRAMA resources. However, publishing or referencing the proposals in the President's annual budget, in addition to posting them on Performance.gov, may increase their visibility and usefulness to congressional decision makers and others. GAO also found that OMB's email instructions to agencies did not align with GPRAMA and Circular A-11 directives for agencies to review a complete list of reports, which could have resulted in a missed opportunity to identify additional report modification proposals. OMB staff stated that their email instructions are not a substitute for A-11 guidance, but also acknowledged that the instructions could have led to missed opportunities.

Selected agencies told GAO they periodically review or update their report modification proposals. Specifically, selected agencies said they involved relevant subject matter experts when developing proposals, and followed OMB instructions to submit their proposals, and consulted with Congress.