

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-427](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

On March 13, 2017, the President issued an executive order requiring a comprehensive reorganization of executive branch agencies. In April 2017, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provided guidance to federal agencies for developing their reform and workforce reduction proposals. Past proposals to reform and reorganize government have not always come to fruition and can take years to implement fully. GAO's prior work has shown that successful reforms or transformations depend upon following change management practices, such as agreement on reform goals, and the involvement of the Congress, federal employees, and other key stakeholders.

This report identifies the key questions that Congress, OMB, and agencies can use to assess the development and implementation of agency reforms. To meet this objective, GAO reviewed its prior work and leading practices on organizational transformations; collaboration; government streamlining and efficiency; fragmentation, overlap, and duplication; high-risk; and on other agency longstanding management challenges. GAO also identified subject matter specialists knowledgeable about issues related to government reform and strategic human capital management who reviewed and commented on GAO's draft questions.

GAO is not making recommendations to OMB in this report. OMB staff provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-18-427](#) For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov or Robert Goldenkoff at (202) 512-2757 or goldenkoff@gao.gov.

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GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

Key Questions to Assess Agency Reform Efforts

Given the potential benefits and challenges of government reform, Congress and the executive branch need the tools and information to help evaluate agencies' reform proposals. Congress's role in reviewing agency proposed reforms will be critical to the success of making significant changes in how the government operates. GAO organized its prior work and leading practices into the following four broad categories that can help assess agency reform efforts.

What GAO Found

Categories for Key Questions



Selected Key Questions

- How well have the proposed reforms indicated the likely result of the elimination, merging, or restructuring of activities with other levels of government or sectors?
- To what extent has the agency established clear outcome-oriented goals and performance measures for the proposed reforms?
- How and to what extent has the agency consulted with the Congress, and other key stakeholders, to develop its proposed reforms?
- To what extent has the agency addressed areas of fragmentation, overlap, and duplication—including the ones GAO identified—in developing its reform proposals?
- Is there a dedicated implementation team that has the capacity, including staffing, resources, and change management, to manage the reform process?
- Has the agency developed an implementation plan with key milestones and deliverables to track implementation progress?
- How does the agency plan to sustain and strengthen employee engagement during and after the proposed reforms?
- To what extent has the agency conducted strategic workforce planning to determine whether it will have the needed resources and capacity, including the skills and competencies, in place for the proposed reforms or reorganization?