Why GAO Did This Study

Extreme weather events, such as tornadoes and hurricanes, have caused major damage and loss of life in the United States. NWS is responsible for developing weather forecasts and issuing warnings to help protect life and property from such events. NWS has determined that it needs to reform its operations and workforce to effectively carry out this responsibility and to improve its provision of services to emergency managers and other partners.

GAO was asked to review NWS’s reform efforts under the Evolve Program. This report examines, among other things, the actions NWS has taken under the Evolve Program and the extent to which it has followed selected leading practices for effective agency reforms. GAO reviewed relevant NWS documents, interviewed officials, and assessed the Evolve reform efforts against selected leading practices.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations to NWS: (1) incorporate key attributes of successful performance measures as it develops measures for the Evolve Program, (2) develop a two-way communications strategy for the program that outlines how the agency will listen and respond to employee concerns, and (3) revise its approach to staffing the program to improve leadership and staff continuity. The Department of Commerce agreed with GAO’s recommendations.

View GAO-21-103792. For more information, contact Cardell D. Johnson at (202) 512-3841 or JohnsonCD1@gao.gov.