

GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-21-105288](#), a Testimony before the Committee on House Administration, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, highlighted the critical need to identify and address deficiencies in the management and security functions of the Capitol Police. Various auditing entities have work ongoing related to the attack on the U.S. Capitol, including GAO and the Capitol Police OIG.

It is important that the Capitol Police is well positioned to respond to existing and future recommendations from auditing entities. To do so, Capitol Police will also need to work closely with the Capitol Police Board, which has varied and wide-ranging oversight roles and responsibilities per statute.

This statement discusses (1) effective practices for addressing recommendations from auditing agencies and (2) GAO's open recommendation to the Capitol Police Board from February 2017. To identify effective practices for addressing recommendations, GAO reviewed reports and testimonies issued from July 2003 through March 2021 that discussed the implementation of GAO recommendations, federal internal control standards, and organizational transformation. GAO also reviewed its February 2017 report on the Capitol Police Board, and used information gathered from its recommendation follow up efforts with the Capitol Police Board in 2020 and 2021.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making any new recommendations in this statement. However, GAO previously made a recommendation in February 2017 that the Board revise its manual to fully incorporate leading practices, which remains open as of June 2021.

View [GAO-21-105288](#). For more information, contact Gretta L. Goodwin at (202) 512-8777 or GoodwinG@gao.gov.

June 15, 2021

CAPITOL POLICE

Applying Effective Practices to Address Recommendations Will Improve Oversight and Management

What GAO Found

The U.S. Capitol Police (Capitol Police) may benefit from applying practices to help implement recommendations from auditing entities, such as those from GAO and the Capitol Police Office of the Inspector General (OIG). These effective practices include the following:

- **Provide management oversight over the prompt remediation of deficiencies and delegate authority.** Federal internal control standards state that management should oversee the prompt remediation of deficiencies. This should be done by communicating the corrective actions to the appropriate personnel and delegating authority for completing these actions.
- **Communicate regularly with auditing entities on the status of recommendations.** Engagement between Capitol Police and auditing agency leaders could provide important leadership attention to help ensure actions are taken to implement recommendations.
- **Work with Congress to address recommendations.** Congress plays a key role in providing oversight and maintaining focus on recommendations from audit entities. For example, federal agencies, including the Capitol Police, are required to report on the implementation status of public recommendations. Further, agencies can also assess the need for legislation to address recommendations and report their findings to Congress.
- **Follow key organizational transformation practices.** As the Capitol Police takes steps to implement recommendations from auditing entities, the agency may benefit from following key organizational transformation practices, such as (1) setting implementation goals and a timeline, (2) dedicating an implementation team to manage the transformation process, and (3) involving employees to obtain their ideas and gain their ownership for the transformation.

Coordination between the Capitol Police and its Board is critical to addressing its recommendations. The Capitol Police Board (the Board) is charged with oversight of the Capitol Police. Given the oversight role of the Board, the Capitol Police may need approval from the Board in order to take actions to address recommendations from auditing entities. GAO's 2017 work on the Board assessed whether the Board, in fulfilling its role in overseeing the Capitol Police, had developed and implemented policies that incorporate leading practices to facilitate accountability, transparency, and effective external communication. In that effort, GAO examined the Board's main governing document, its Manual of Procedures, and determined that it fully incorporated one leading practice and partially incorporated five others. Specifically, the Board's manual did develop processes for the internal functions of the Board but did not address any Board responsibilities in ensuring that any audit findings and recommendations to the Capitol Police were promptly resolved. By incorporating leading practices into its manual, the Board can ensure it is facilitating accountability, transparency, and effective external communication as it fulfills its oversight role of the Capitol Police.