

GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-21-464](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Over one million employees and a range of visitors seeking services at federal facilities depend on FPS to ensure the safety of both people and property at these locations.

This report examines stakeholders' perspectives on FPS's performance of three key activities. GAO identified key activities from FPS data on work hours. GAO held discussion groups with stakeholders from 27 randomly selected facilities where FPS provided guard services and responded to incidents in fiscal year 2019 and analyzed stakeholder responses from 2017-2019 to GSA's and FPS's feedback instruments. These sources of stakeholder views are not representative but collectively provide insight into stakeholders' satisfaction with how FPS is performing key activities. GAO also reviewed agency documents; interviewed FPS officials about FPS's performance; and compared FPS's security assessment reports to criteria in GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that FPS include in its Facility Security Assessment reports both the assumptions and sources used to develop the cost estimate for each security measure it recommends. DHS concurred with the recommendation, but stated that clarifying cost estimates is unlikely to lead to increased adoption of security measures. GAO believes the recommendation is warranted and that the proposed actions DHS outlines in its response to the recommendation, while helpful, are not fully in line with the recommendation.

View [GAO-21-464](#). For more information, contact Catina B. Latham at (202) 512-2834 or lathamc@gao.gov.

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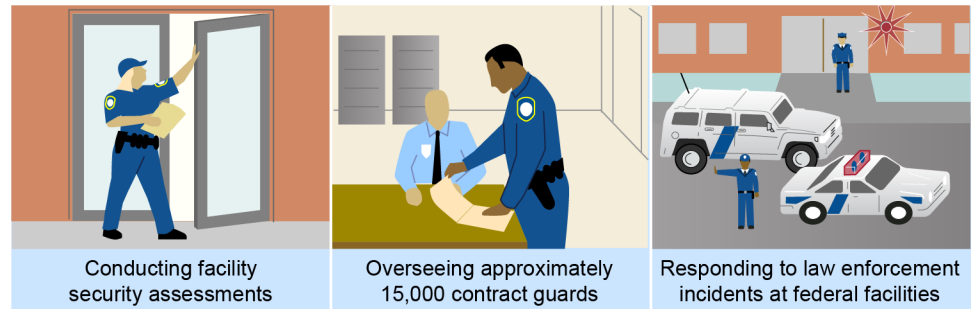
FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Better Documented Cost Estimates Could Help Stakeholders Make Security Decisions

What GAO Found

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) provides security and protection at more than 9,000 federal facilities. FPS performs a variety of security activities in conjunction with the General Services Administration (GSA), which functions as the landlord at most of these facilities, and with the federal agencies, which occupy these facilities as tenants. These stakeholders can provide important perspectives on FPS's performance of its key activities (see figure).

The Federal Protective Service's Three Key Security Activities



Source: GAO. | GAO-21-464

Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with many aspects of FPS's performance of key activities but also identified aspects where they thought FPS could make improvements. For example, stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the professionalism of FPS personnel and commended FPS's coordination in responding to law enforcement incidents. However, some stakeholders said they would like to see FPS oversee contract guards more often. In addition, many stakeholders said that FPS could improve the cost estimates in its security assessment reports.

GAO's review of FPS's Facility Security Assessment reports found that cost estimates for the recommended security measures lacked information that could help stakeholders make decisions to accept or reject FPS's recommendations. Specifically, recent reports for 27 selected buildings did not document (1) the assumptions FPS made to produce the cost estimates (e.g., the scope of work) and (2) the sources FPS used to create the estimate. In one report, for example, FPS recommended additional fencing and provided a cost estimate with an exact dollar amount. However, FPS did not document the assumptions it used to develop the estimate, such as the height and linear feet of fence or the fencing material.

According to GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*, cost estimates should provide information about the assumptions and sources used to develop an estimate so that decision-makers can understand the level of uncertainty around the estimate. By providing detailed information about the cost estimates in Facility Security Assessment reports, FPS could better inform stakeholders and potentially increase implementation of recommended security measures, designed to increase the safety of people and property at these facilities.