Why GAO Did This Study

To help ensure the integrity of the immigration system, FDNS develops policies and procedures for detecting benefit fraud, national security, and public safety concerns related to immigration benefit applications. It also conducts administrative investigations in those areas, among other activities. For example, FDNS investigates concerns that the marriages that form the basis of family-based immigration benefits are not bona fide, or that international students are not meeting attendance criteria to maintain their nonimmigrant status.

A 2020 House Appropriations Committee report included a provision for GAO to review USCIS fraud detection operations. This review describes FDNS’s workload and evaluates, among other things, USCIS processes to determine staff resource needs; efforts to assess fraud risks and develop an antifraud strategy; and efforts to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of antifraud activities. GAO analyzed USCIS documents and data on FDNS operations from fiscal years 2016 through 2021 and interviewed officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations to USCIS, including that it identify factors affecting its workload; implement additional data entry guidance; and implement processes to regularly conduct fraud risk assessments, develop an antifraud strategy, and conduct risk-based evaluations of the effectiveness of antifraud activities. DHS concurred with the recommendations.

View GAO-22-105328. For more information, contact Rebecca Gambler at (202) 512-8777 or GamblerR@gao.gov.