GAO Highlights

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

GSA Should Assess Agencies' Effectiveness at Preventing Service Disruptions

GAO-26-107919 August 2026

A report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Contact: Carol C. Harris at harriscc@gao.gov

What GAO Found

The General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for ensuring that federal agencies have access to telecommunications services. Six agencies GAO selected to review recently completed their transitions from expired, legacy telecommunications contracts to the replacement Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) contract. However, their transitions were delayed by more than three years past GSA's September 2022 revised deadline. Due to continued delays, GSA took actions to extend the service period of the legacy contracts until May 2026 at the latest to avoid service disruptions. The delays exposed the agencies to price increases due to the ability of vendors to raise prices during the extended service periods and the phasing out of legacy telecommunications technologies. In particular, there was a total 206 percent price increase from February to March 2025 for the selected agencies' Networx contracts—the largest of the legacy contracts.

Amount Billed for Selected Agencies' Legacy Networx Contracts in February 2025 and March 2025

Agency	February 2025 costs	March 2025 costs	Percent change
Department of Agriculture	$227,986.93	$543,645.43	138%
Department of Commerce	$1,768,695.34	$5,761,127.10	226%
Department of Defense	$4,842,079.74	$15,012,896.07	210%
Department of Homeland Security	$5,855,206.65	$16,853,049.42	188%
Department of the Interior	$399,435.26	$1,858,077.70	365%
Department of Transportation	$282,652.93	$896,799.13	217%
Total	**$13,376,056.85**	**$40,925,594.85**	**206%**

Source: GAO analysis of billing data provided by the General Services Administration. | GAO-26-107919

Note: Agencies' increases varied due to prevalence of legacy telecommunication technologies.

The six agencies collectively identified 21 factors that contributed to their transition delays. The most commonly reported factors included performance issues with EIS vendors, the COVID-19 pandemic, and legacy connections. For example, officials from four selected agencies identified supply chain disruptions and staffing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three of the six agencies identified and mitigated risks related to over half of their cited delay factors. Further, GSA and the six agencies were inconsistent in identifying and mitigating the risk of service disruptions due to missed final deadlines. For example, two of the six agencies' related risks were either closed (i.e., resolved) or did not specify the final 2026 deadlines.

GSA does not currently know whether all selected agencies experienced service disruptions due to these inconsistent risk mitigation efforts. This is because, among other reasons, GSA is not notified whether a replacement service was in place before an expiring legacy service was disconnected. GSA has begun planning for the follow-on to EIS but has not determined which agencies had disruptions, if there were any impacts, and the effectiveness of any mitigation efforts. Until GSA determines the success of agencies' mitigation efforts, it will be missing key information that could help inform the next transition and ultimately prevent excess costs and delays going forward.

Why GAO Did This Study

GSA was responsible for successfully managing 221 agencies' transitions from expired legacy telecommunications contracts to the replacement contract: EIS. Agencies' transitions to EIS were marked with significant delays, prompting GSA to extend the deadlines of the expiring legacy contracts multiple times. The final deadline was May 31, 2026.

GAO was asked to review federal agencies' efforts to transition to EIS. This report (1) describes the status and cost implications of selected agencies' efforts to transition to EIS, (2) identifies key factors that selected agencies reported contributing to delays in transitioning, and (3) determines the extent to which these agencies and GSA mitigated risks related to the identified delay factors and the risk of missing final transition deadlines.

GAO reviewed transition billing data and interviewed agency officials to identify transition status and key delay factors. GAO also analyzed risk management documentation from GSA, as well as six agencies that had a significant amount of transition work remaining as of September 2024: the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, the Interior, and Transportation.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making a recommendation to GSA to determine (1) whether at least the selected agencies experienced service disruptions and if so, the impact of those disruptions and (2) the effectiveness of agencies' efforts to mitigate service disruptions. GSA concurred with our recommendation and stated that it is working on a plan to address it.