

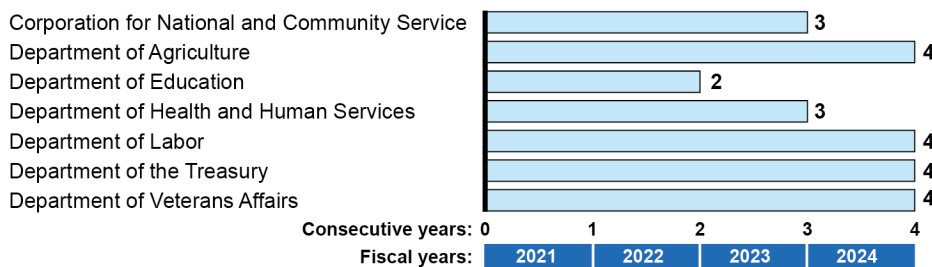
A report to the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

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What GAO Found

Executive branch agencies are required to report improper payment estimates for each risk-susceptible program. GAO identified seven agencies with programs reporting estimated improper payment rates of 10 percent or higher for 2, 3, or 4 consecutive fiscal years from 2021 through 2024.

Consecutive Fiscal Years of Noncompliance Reported for Agencies' Improper Payment Rates Since Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 Implementation



Source: GAO analysis of Office of Management and Budget PaymentAccuracy.gov data. | GAO-26-108044

To improve transparency, agencies that are noncompliant under the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 (PIIA) are required to report annually to Congress and GAO. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides guidance on PIIA requirements to agencies. However, GAO found that the guidance does not direct noncompliant agencies to submit the required annual reports. Unless OMB updates its guidance, Congress may not have the information it needs to assess agencies' actions to address improper payments and hold them accountable.

Reporting requirements for noncompliant agencies vary, depending on how many consecutive fiscal years programs are noncompliant with PIIA. GAO found that all agencies with noncompliant programs for 2 consecutive years had either submitted additional program integrity proposals to OMB, as required, or taken other actions to help bring their programs into compliance.

Four of the six agencies with programs found noncompliant for 3 consecutive years submitted the required 3-year noncompliance information to Congress, OMB, and GAO. The Departments of Labor (DOL) and the Treasury did not submit the information timely, and the Treasury did not report to GAO.

All four agencies with programs found noncompliant for 4 consecutive years submitted reports to Congress and OMB as required by PIIA and OMB guidance.

Five of the seven agencies did not have sufficient documented policies and procedures to ensure consistent timely reporting for their noncompliant programs. When agencies do not meet PIIA's annual and consecutive year reporting requirements, Congress loses visibility into which programs continue to pose elevated risks and whether agencies are taking meaningful steps to address them. Having such policies and procedures will help ensure that Congress receives timely information needed to inform legislative decision-making and support efforts for reducing government-wide improper payments and saving taxpayer dollars.

Why GAO Did This Study

Executive branch agencies have reported cumulative improper payment estimates of about \$3 trillion since fiscal year 2003, including \$186 billion for fiscal year 2025. To help save taxpayer dollars, it is imperative that agencies prioritize reducing their improper payments and timely report on their efforts to do so.

House Report 117-389, which accompanied the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2023, includes a provision for GAO to provide quarterly reports on improper payments. This is GAO's 11th and final report.

This report examines actions that agencies have taken to meet certain PIIA reporting requirements for programs that had estimated improper payment rates of 10 percent or higher for 2 or more consecutive years. For programs with reported noncompliance, GAO reviewed relevant laws and OMB guidance and analyzed agencies' policies and procedures, budget information, and information on PaymentAccuracy.gov.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations, including one to OMB to clarify its guidance for agencies to report required annual information, and one each to the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services (HHS), the Treasury, and Agriculture (USDA) to design and implement a process to help ensure tracking and monitoring of PIIA reporting requirements for their programs and to help save taxpayer dollars. DOL, Education, HHS, Treasury, and USDA agreed with the recommendations. OMB did not provide comments.

In addition, GAO's prior work has highlighted numerous actions that agencies and Congress can take to reduce improper payments and fraud.