

A report to congressional committees

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CGC Storis



Border Barrier



Airport Checkpoint Scanning System

Source (left to right): U.S. Coast Guard; Matt Gush/stock.adobe.com; and Transportation Security Administration. | GAO-26-108118

## What GAO Found

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its components spend billions annually on programs to acquire systems and capabilities that support national security. In fiscal year (FY) 2025, GAO reviewed 27 DHS major acquisition programs—generally, those with total costs over \$300 million. To support timely delivery of capabilities and minimize cost growth, DHS policy requires programs to get DHS approval for their baseline cost, schedule, and performance goals. Of the 27 programs reviewed, 19 had received this approval while the other 8 had not yet reached the stage where this was required.

As of September 30, 2025, 15 of the 19 programs had revised their baseline goals since initially setting them, some of them multiple times. Most programs with revised baselines delayed their plans to deliver full capabilities. Baselined costs collectively increased a projected \$11.4 billion, or 26 percent, since they were first set. Of those 19 programs, 18 were meeting their most recent baseline goals. One program—the Coast Guard’s Offshore Patrol Cutter—has ongoing efforts to revise its baseline to reflect recent schedule delays and cost increases.

DHS’s programs face a continually changing environment, which affects their ability to manage cost and schedule risks. For example:

- **Staff.** Uncertainties around staff could risk programs’ ability to achieve future milestones. Specifically, in FY 2025, eight programs experienced at least a 20 percent or more reduction in staff, resulting in lost subject matter expertise and technical skills.
- **Acquisition oversight.** In October 2025, DHS decided to dissolve the office responsible for department-level oversight of major acquisition programs. DHS officials stated some of the oversight responsibilities had been moved to other parts of DHS. However, as of January 2026, DHS officials were unsure what level of oversight DHS would continue to provide. In May 2026, at least one part of that office was reconstituted, according to DHS officials.
- **Funding.** Twelve of the 27 programs expect to receive at least \$14 billion in funding from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act.

GAO will continue to monitor DHS’s updated acquisition oversight structure as well as DHS’s portfolio of major acquisition programs.

## Why GAO Did This Study

DHS plans to invest over \$55 billion to acquire systems for its current portfolio of major acquisition programs—over \$11 billion more than DHS had initially planned.

The Explanatory Statement accompanying a bill for the DHS Appropriations Act, 2015 includes a provision for GAO to review DHS’s major acquisitions on an ongoing basis. This report assesses (1) how DHS major acquisition programs have performed since establishing their baseline cost, schedule, and performance goals; and (2) the status of DHS’s acquisition portfolio, including any cost and schedule risks.

GAO selected 27 of DHS’s largest acquisition programs to determine program status as of the end of FY 2025. Of these, GAO identified 19 with DHS-approved acquisition baselines for further analysis. GAO reviewed key documents; collected cost, schedule, and performance information; and interviewed DHS officials.