



United States Government Accountability Office

Report to Congressional Committees

JUNE 2026

DHS Annual Assessment

Dynamic Environment Affects Efforts to Manage Acquisition Risks

BORDER SECURITY	DISASTER RESPONSE	CUSTOMS	
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY	CYBERSECURITY	IMMIGRATION	



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.

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Abbreviations

ADE	acquisition decision event
APB	acquisition program baseline
CAPI	Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker
CAT	Credential Authentication Technology
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CBTT	Cross Border Tunnel Threat
CDM	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOT&E	Director, Office of Test and Evaluation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOC	full operational capability
IOC	initial operational capability
IOT&E	initial operational test and evaluation
IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System
KPP	key performance parameters
MLH	Medium Lift Helicopter
MRS	Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft
NGN-PS	Next Generation Network Priority Services
NSC	National Security Cutter
PARM	Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management
OPC	Offshore Patrol Cutter
O&S	operations and support
PC&I	procurement, construction, and improvements
PSC	Polar Security Cutter
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard

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June 9, 2026

Congressional Committees

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) invests tens of billions of taxpayer dollars in systems and capabilities intended to secure the border, advance maritime safety, screen travelers, enhance cybersecurity, improve disaster response, and execute a wide variety of other operations. DHS develops and obtains these systems and capabilities through acquisition programs. DHS’s “major acquisition programs” are those that involve life-cycle costs of at least \$300 million, which includes developmental costs.¹ Major acquisition programs take multiple years to develop, test, and deploy systems and capabilities to end users. To help manage its acquisition programs, DHS established an acquisition management policy in November 2008. To improve acquisition oversight, department leadership also dedicated resources and implemented additional guidance. We found the policy, as of September 30, 2025, to be generally sound in that it reflected key program management practices identified in our prior work. Nevertheless, we have highlighted challenges that DHS has faced in implementing the policy and strengthening its acquisition management function.

Over the past fiscal year, DHS major acquisition programs have experienced significant changes. Those changes include receiving billions of dollars in additional funding from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act, reorganization of the DHS acquisition management structure, recent and ongoing revisions to DHS acquisition policy, and increased staff turnover. We discuss each of these areas of change later in this report.

The Explanatory Statement accompanying a bill for the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 contains a provision for GAO to conduct ongoing reviews of DHS major acquisition programs, as

¹DHS defines major acquisition programs as those with life-cycle cost estimates of \$300 million or more. In some cases, DHS may define a program with a life-cycle cost estimate less than \$300 million as a major acquisition if it has significant strategic or policy implications for homeland security, among other things.

directed in the Senate report.² This review, our 11th annual report, assesses (1) how DHS major acquisition programs have performed since establishing their baseline cost, schedule, and performance goals; and (2) the status of the DHS acquisition portfolio, including any cost and schedule risks.

To conduct our assessment, we selected 27 programs from the 36 major acquisition programs identified in DHS’s January 2025 Master Acquisition Oversight List. DHS defined major acquisitions as level 2 for programs with life-cycle cost estimates from \$300 million to less than \$1 billion and level 1 for programs with life-cycle cost estimates of \$1 billion or more.

This report contains our assessment of the 27 program we selected.³ Of those programs 18 are level 1 major acquisition programs, all of which had at least one segment in the process of obtaining new capabilities at the initiation of this review. The other nine programs are level 1 or level 2 major acquisition programs that we identified for a variety of reasons such as prior work and risk of not meeting cost, schedule, or performance goals. See table 1 for the full list of programs that we selected to review.

Table 1: DHS Major Acquisition Programs Selected by GAO for Review (Acquisition Level as of Jan. 2025)

DHS component	Program	Program category	Acquisition level
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM)	Threat detection monitoring	1
	Cyber Analytic and Data System (CADS) ^a	Threat detection monitoring	1 ^b
	CyberSentry ^a	Threat detection monitoring	2 ^c
	Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1	Telecommunications	2
	NGN-PS Phase 2 ^a	Telecommunications	2
Management Directorate (MGMT)	Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART)	Dashboards/user interface	1
	Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI)	Dashboards/user interface	2

²Explanatory Statement submitted by Mr. Rogers of Kentucky, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, regarding H.R. 240, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015, 161 Cong. Rec., H-276 (Jan. 13, 2015) (referencing S. Rep. No. 113-198, at 22-23).

³We excluded the remaining nine major acquisition programs for a variety of reasons, including lower risk programs already in deployment.

DHS component	Program	Program category	Acquisition level
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)	Telecommunications	2
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS)	Screening operations	1
	Credential Authentication Technology (CAT)	Screening operations	2
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker (CAPI) ^a	Maritime operations	2
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	Aviation operations	1
	Medium Range Surveillance (MRS) Aircraft (HC-144B, HC-27J)	Aviation operations	1
	Long Range Surveillance (LRS) Aircraft (HC-130J)	Aviation operations	1
	National Security Cutter (NSC)	Maritime operations	1
	Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC)	Maritime operations	1
	Polar Security Cutter (PSC)	Maritime operations	1
	Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC)	Maritime operations	1
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)	Dashboards/user interface	1
	Biometric Entry-Exit Program (BE-E)	Screening operations	1
	Cross Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT) ^a	Threat detection monitoring	1
	Common Operating Picture (COP) ^a	Threat detection monitoring	2
	Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST) ^a	Threat detection monitoring	1
	Light Enforcement Platform (LEP)	Aviation operations	1
	Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH)	Aviation operations	1
	Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA)	Aviation operations	1
	Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration Program (NII-I) ^a	Threat detection monitoring	1

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) data. | GAO-26-108118

^aThis program had not yet established an acquisition program baseline approved by DHS leadership as of September 30, 2025.

^bCADS is designated as a level 1 major acquisition program using the DHS rapid acquisition framework, which enables rapid delivery of capabilities to the field.

^cCyberSentry is designated as a level 2 major acquisition program using the DHS rapid acquisition framework, which enables rapid delivery of capabilities to the field.

To determine how the 27 selected programs were performing against their established goals, we analyzed key acquisition documentation containing program cost, schedule and performance information, including acquisition program baselines (APB). Since the November 2008

acquisition management policy was established, these documents have required DHS-level approval. Nineteen programs had department-approved APBs as of September 30, 2025, and eight did not. As a result, we excluded these eight programs from our analysis of APBs. None of these eight programs have progressed to the point in the acquisition life cycle framework where an approved APB is required by DHS policy.

To determine the status of the portfolio of 27 programs we selected, including any cost and schedule risks, we reviewed program documentation and conducted interviews. To understand current costs and schedule milestones achieved in the past fiscal year, we reviewed life-cycle cost estimate data as of September 30, 2025, program documentation, responses to a standardized questionnaire sent to all programs, and interviews with program officials. To understand upcoming schedule and cost risks, we reviewed program interviews, program documentation such as acquisition decision memoranda, and external sources such as information from the Congressional Budget Office. Unless otherwise noted, all dollar values reported are in fiscal year 2024 dollars.

To determine the status of DHS's portfolio, we also analyzed any significant changes DHS major acquisition programs experienced in fiscal year 2025 such as new funding and workforce changes, among other things. To do this for all 27 selected programs, we reviewed program interviews, program written responses to standard questions, and legislation. Public Law 119-21—also known as the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act or as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act—included provisions that provided additional funding to DHS acquisitions.⁴ For the purposes of this analysis we also considered two additional programs, the Border Wall System and Arctic Security Cutter, both of which received funding.⁵ We provide an update on these two programs, but they are not included in our portfolio analysis or as individual assessments. To understand how this funding affected DHS major acquisition programs, we reviewed legislation and program-provided information.

⁴An Act To provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Pub. L. No. 119-21 (2025).

⁵At the start of this review, when selecting programs for individual assessment, GAO was informed that the Border Wall System Program was a level 3 non-major acquisition program centered on the Rio Grande Valley. The Arctic Security Cutter program was not yet included as a program of record on the January 2025 Major Acquisition Oversight List. As such neither was included in our broader analysis.

Overall, we conducted individual assessments for all 27 programs. For each of the 27 selected programs, we analyzed key acquisition documents such as APBs and life-cycle cost estimates. We used a standardized questionnaire to collect information on cost, schedule, and performance progress. We interviewed program, component, and headquarters officials to discuss current program status as of September 2025. In instances where significant updates occurred after September 2025, we included that information and indicated the relevant date.

Appendix I presents individual assessments of and information about each of the 27 programs we reviewed. The assessments include key information such as the status of each program's schedule, cost, and performance and testing (hereafter referred to as performance). Our program assessments are intended to provide decision-makers a means to quickly gauge a program's progress and the extent to which the program could face risks to cost, schedule, or performance.

Appendix II provides detailed information on our objectives, scope, and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2025 to June 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.⁶ Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

⁶From October 1 through November 12, 2025, January 31 through February 3, 2026, and February 14 through April 30, 2026, DHS was subject to a lapse in appropriations. We sent the draft report to DHS for comment on February 26, 2026 and received comments from DHS on May 13, 2026.

Background

To help manage its multi-billion-dollar acquisition portfolio, DHS established policies and processes for acquisition management, test and evaluation, and resource allocation. The department uses these policies and processes to guide the development and delivery of systems that are intended to close critical capability gaps, helping enable DHS to execute its missions and achieve its goals. We have made numerous recommendations to DHS as part of our prior work, including earlier DHS Annual Assessments.⁷

Acquisition Management Policy and Oversight

As of September 30, 2025, DHS's policies and processes for managing its major acquisition programs were primarily contained in its Acquisition Management Directive 102-01 and Acquisition Management Instruction 102-01-001 (hereafter referred to as acquisition management policy). DHS issued the initial version of the directive in November 2008 in an effort to establish an acquisition management system that effectively provides required capability to program operators in support of the department's missions. DHS issued multiple updates to the directive and related instruction, in part to be responsive to our recommendations. DHS issued the most recent version of the directive in November 2025 and, as of January 2026, was revising the associated instruction.⁸ Because DHS was in the process of revising the instruction at the time of our review, the full extent of changes was unknown and we did not review the November 2025 directive. All programs we reviewed this year were subject to the April 2024 version of the acquisition management policy that includes the February 2019 directive and the April 2024 instruction, which we describe in more detail below.

According to the April 2024 version of the acquisition management policy, the Under Secretary for Management was the acquisition decision authority for the department's largest acquisition programs—level 1 programs and level 2 programs. Component Acquisition Executives—typically the most senior acquisition management official within each DHS

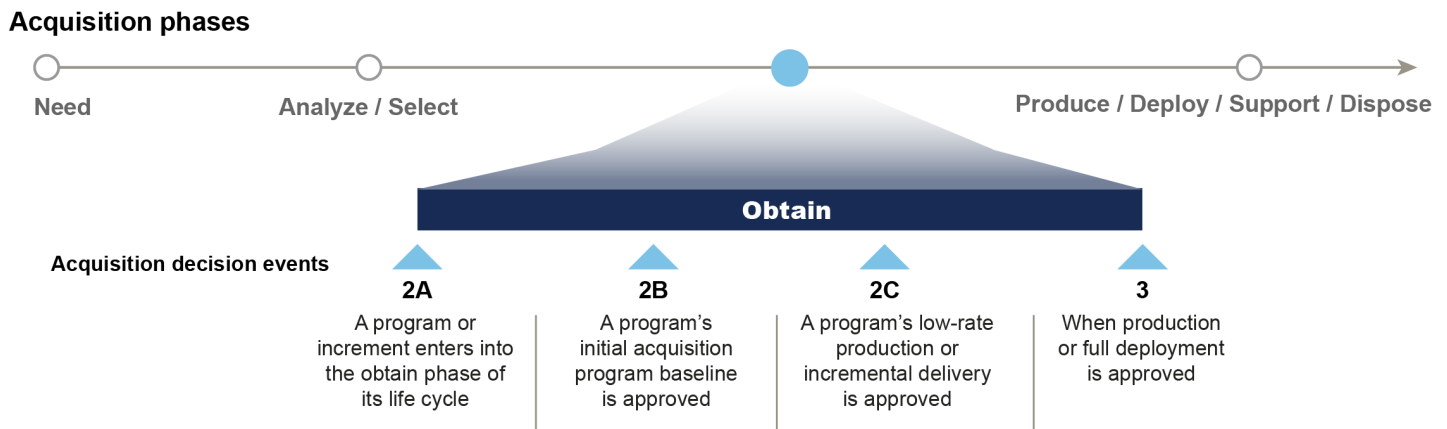
⁷Our previous 10 DHS annual assessments included 16 recommendations. As of December 2025, DHS has implemented all but one recommendation concerning cybersecurity policy. DHS concurred with and is taking steps to implement this recommendation. We have also made recommendations as part of our other DHS acquisitions work. For example, in November 2025, we made four recommendations to DHS and the Coast Guard to improve management and oversight of the Offshore Patrol Cutter program, one of DHS's highest priority programs.

⁸DHS Directive 102-01, *Acquisition Management* (Nov. 17, 2025). According to the directive, the purpose of the November 2025 update was to modernize the department's acquisition framework to support efficient, flexible, and accountable delivery of mission capabilities across all acquisition types.

component—may have been delegated acquisition decision authority for level 2 programs.

The April 2024 version of DHS acquisition management policy established an acquisition life-cycle framework that identified major milestones that a program must complete.⁹ It also identified a series of acquisition decision events (ADE) where the acquisition decision authority reviewed key documents to assess whether the program was ready to proceed to the next phase and, if so, approved those documents. Depending on the program, these events could occur simultaneously, within months of each other, or be separated by several years. Figure 1 reflects DHS’s acquisition life cycle as of September 30, 2025.

Figure 1: DHS Acquisition Decision Events in the Obtain Phase for Major Acquisition Programs as of September 30, 2025



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

⁹DHS Directive 102-01, *Acquisition Management Directive* (July 28, 2015) (incorporating change 1, Feb. 25, 2019) and DHS Instruction 102-01-001, *Acquisition Management* (Jan. 10, 2023) (incorporating change 1, Apr. 17, 2024). The DHS acquisition life-cycle framework includes phases designed to identify the need for a new acquisition program; review alternative approaches to meeting the need and recommending a best option; develop, test and evaluate the selected option; produce and deliver the capability to its operators; and maintain the capability until it is retired.

DHS's acquisition policies also previously included a 2020 instruction that outlined a rapid acquisition life-cycle framework, which had been intended to enable rapid delivery of capabilities to the field by streamlining the standard acquisition framework and requiring more technical maturity of the acquired solution.¹⁰

The April 2024 version of DHS acquisition management policy stated that the APB was the agreement between the acquisition program, component, and department-level officials that established how systems being acquired should perform, when they should be delivered, and what they should cost. The APB approved by DHS at a program's ADE 2B established objective (target) and threshold (maximum acceptable for cost, latest acceptable for schedule, and minimum or maximum acceptable for performance) parameters. We refer to the threshold parameter as a goal. Under the older pre-2019 version of the policy, APB approval was required at ADE 2A. Under the April 2024 acquisition management instruction, programs still prepared a component-approved preliminary APB for ADE 2A that laid out preliminary cost, schedule, and performance goals.

According to the Director, Office of Test and Evaluation, programs traditionally use key performance parameters (KPP) from their Operational Requirements Document as the APB performance goals. The 2018 DHS requirements manual, which DHS rescinded in November 2025, described KPPs as a program's most important requirements that a system must meet to fulfill its fundamental purpose. KPPs include things like airspeed for an aircraft or the detection range for a surveillance system.

According to the April 2024 version of DHS acquisition management policy, a program that has not met or will not meet any cost, schedule, or performance threshold approved in the APB at ADE 2B will be considered in breach status, or, in certain circumstances, result in an administrative update. An administrative update may be approved by the acquisition decision authority due to a change in scope resulting from situations

¹⁰Department of Homeland Security, *Rapid Acquisition*, DHS Instruction 102-01-011, (Feb. 25, 2020) (incorporating change 1, Aug. 28, 2020).

outside of the program's control, such as natural events or changes in funding, among others.¹¹

If a program did not satisfy an approved APB threshold or if the program manager forecasted a threshold will not be met in the future, the program manager was to formally notify the Component Acquisition Executive and acquisition decision authority in a memorandum identifying the root cause and operational effect of the unmet threshold. Under the April 2024 version of acquisition management policy, the Executive Director, Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management (PARM), assessed the formal notification memorandum to determine whether the acquisition program required an administrative update or was in breach status.¹² We collectively refer to any of these updates to an APB as revisions.

Programs in breach status were required to develop a remediation plan before they could exit breach status. These plans should have outlined a time frame for the program to either return to its APB parameters, rebaseline (i.e., establish new cost, schedule, or performance parameters), or have a DHS-led program review that results in recommendations for a revised APB.

Under the April 2024 version of acquisition management policy, in addition to the acquisition decision authority, other bodies and senior officials supported DHS's acquisition management function:

- **The Acquisition Review Board** reviewed major acquisition programs for proper management, oversight, accountability, and alignment with the department's strategic functions at ADEs and other meetings as needed.
- **The Line of Business Chiefs** include the DHS Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Information Officer, the Chief Procurement Officer, the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Chief Security Officer, and the Chief Readiness Support Officer, among others. The Line of Business Chiefs were responsible and accountable for adhering to the department's acquisition policies and procedures to ensure sound management, review, support, and approval. The

¹¹If the root cause for not meeting a baseline parameter does not meet the criteria for an administrative update or the program requires more than 12 months to be within approved APB parameters, the program will be determined to be in breach status. *Acquisition Management*, DHS Instruction 102-01-001.

¹²As discussed later in this report, in October 2025, DHS approved a memorandum dissolving the Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management.

Line of Business Chiefs were also members of the Acquisition Review Board.

- **The Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management (PARM)** had been responsible for DHS's overall acquisition program governance process, supported the Acquisition Review Board, and reported directly to the Under Secretary for Management. PARM developed and updated acquisition management policy and procedures, reviewed major programs, provided guidance for workforce planning activities, and provided support to program managers.
- **Components**, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the U.S. Coast Guard, sponsor specific acquisition programs.¹³ Once programs complete delivery of all planned capabilities to end users and reach full operational capability, they are delegated or transferred to the component to provide oversight and guidance.
 - **Component Acquisition Executives** are responsible for overseeing the progress of their respective portfolios.
 - **Program offices**, also within the components, are responsible for planning and executing DHS's individual programs. They are expected to do so within the cost, schedule, and performance parameters established in their APBs. If they cannot do so, programs may be approved for an administrative update or may be considered in breach status and must take specific steps, as noted above.
 - **Program user representatives** have overall responsibility for defining capability requirements and are involved in ensuring the overall test and evaluation strategy properly reflects those requirements and the overall operational environment, including the threat. The user representative identifies mission critical functions, contributes to the development of failure definition and scoring criteria, and

¹³DHS's components consist of operational components—those that have responsibility for directly achieving one or more of the department's missions or activities—and support components—those that generally provide assistance or guidance to other DHS components or external organizations. For example, the Management Directorate is a support component that generally provides assistance and guidance to other DHS components and external organizations and includes functions like budget, finance, information technology, facilities, human capital, and acquisitions. However, the Management Directorate also manages acquisition programs. Typically, these programs are those that involve multiple components, such as programs related to relocating the DHS headquarters and updates to financial systems for multiple components.

coordinates for representative system operators and maintainers to support test and evaluation activities.

Test and Evaluation Policy

DHS's November 2024 Test and Evaluation Instruction 026-06-001 sets forth policies and processes for test and evaluation of the capabilities delivered by the department's major acquisition programs.¹⁴ The instruction states the primary purpose of test and evaluation is to provide timely, accurate information to program managers, decision-makers, users, and other stakeholders to support acquisition in a manner that reduces programmatic, financial, schedule, technical, and operational risks.

DHS test and evaluation policy—outlined in Test and Evaluation Instruction 026-06-001 as well as DHS Directive 026-06—assigns specific responsibilities to particular individuals and entities throughout the department:¹⁵

- **Program managers** have overall responsibility for planning and executing their programs' test and evaluation strategies, including scheduling and funding test and evaluation activities, delivering systems for testing, and developing a program's test and evaluation master plan.
- **Independent test agents** are responsible for planning, conducting, analyzing, assessing, and reporting on test and evaluation. Their job is to identify whether a system meets its KPPs and provide an evaluation of the operational effectiveness, suitability, and resilience of a system in a realistic environment. The independent test agents must be independent of the program, manager, end user and developer. The two types of independent test agents are governmental and commercial.
- **The Director, Office of Test and Evaluation** is responsible for approving major acquisition program independent test agents, operational test and evaluation plans, and test and evaluation master plans. As appropriate, the Director is also responsible for overseeing operational test and evaluation, reviewing independent test agent reports, and assessing those reports.

¹⁴Department of Homeland Security, *Test and Evaluation*, DHS Instruction 026-06-001, Rev. 02 (Nov. 18, 2024).

¹⁵DHS Instruction 026-06-001, *Test and Evaluation*; and DHS Directive 026-06, Rev. 02, *Test and Evaluation* (Oct. 1, 2020).

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- As an acquisition program proceeds through its life cycle, the testing emphasis moves gradually from developmental test and evaluation to operational test and evaluation. Earlier developmental testing is aimed at reducing risk and determining the likelihood the system will meet requirements. After developmental testing, programs transition to operational testing which is used to determine the operational effectiveness, operational suitability, and operational resilience of the system. Programs typically conduct operational test and evaluation to support a full-rate production decision at ADE 3. In addition to operational test and evaluation, programs must complete an assessment of cyber resilience to inform ADE 3.

Most Selected Programs Have Revised Their Initial Baselines and Experienced Schedule and Cost Growth

Most Selected Programs Have Revised Baselines

By the end of fiscal year 2025, 19 major acquisition programs had established their initial cost and schedule baseline goals. Of those 19 programs, 15 had revised their initial goals at least once and 11 of these programs had revised their baselines three or more times. Only one program was not meeting those updated goals.

As of September 30, 2025, nearly all of DHS's major acquisition programs were meeting their more recently approved baselines. The one program not meeting current goals—the Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) program—declared a schedule breach in July 2025 and is planning breach remediation. OPC has previously revised its APB three times. We discuss additional details about the current status of the OPC program later in this report. In July 2025, officials told us the breach affected Stage 1 ships, that OPC 1 was delayed at least another year to December 2026, and that OPCs 3 and 4 are canceled. We have

previously reported on OPC’s challenges with Stage 1.¹⁶ As of November 2025, the OPC Stage 1 shipbuilder, Eastern Shipbuilding Group, Inc. (ESG), had stopped work on OPCs 1-4 and it was unclear whether ESG would deliver any ships.

In fiscal year 2025, four programs established initial baselines—CBP’s Light Enforcement Platform, Biometric Entry-Exit, and Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft programs, as well as FEMA’s Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative.

- **Light Enforcement Platform**, after two delays, established an initial baseline for its rotary wing aircraft segment which was approximately 9 months later than planned at ADE-2A.
- **Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative** established its initial baseline and achieved ADE 2B in November 2024 on schedule.
- **Biometric Entry-Exit and Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft** revised their APBs. Biometric Entry-Exit’s sea segment established an initial baseline when it achieved ADE-2A/3/FOC in September 2025 and the Multi Role Enforcement Aircraft’s land interdiction segment set an initial baseline at their ADE-2B in March 2025.

Additionally, in January 2025, the Polar Security Cutter (PSC) program exited breach status after DHS approved a new baseline. It had previously experienced significant cost, schedule, and design issues. Under this new baseline, the delivery of the lead ship is now delayed by 9 years, and the program estimates that the lead ship’s costs will nearly equal the cost of three PSCs under its initial baseline—approximately \$3.4 billion. See table 2 for additional information on the 19 baselined programs and their goals.

¹⁶For more information on OPC, see GAO, *Offshore Patrol Cutter: Coast Guard Should Gain Key Knowledge Before Buying More Ships*, [GAO-26-107583](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 25, 2025). GAO, *Coast Guard Acquisitions: Offshore Patrol Cutter Program Needs to Mature Technology and Design*, [GAO-23-105805](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 20, 2023). And GAO, *Coast Guard Acquisitions: Opportunities Exist to Reduce Risk for the Offshore Patrol Cutter Program*, [GAO-21-9](#) (Washington, D.C.: October 28, 2020).

Table 2: DHS’s 19 Baselined Programs and Their Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) Information as of September 30, 2025

Component	Program	Calendar year of initial APB	Calendar year of current APB	Number of APB revisions
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM)	2013	2021	5
	Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1	2011	2018	3
DHS Management Directorate (MGMT)	Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART)	2016	2023	3
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI)	2024	2024	0
	Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS)	2011	2023	6
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS)	2020	2021	1
	Credential Authentication Technology (CAT)	2018	2024	3
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS)	2012	2020	1
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	2023	2023	0
	Medium Range Surveillance (MRS) Aircraft (HC-144B & HC-27J)	2016	2022	1
	National Security Cutter (NSC)	2007	2025	6
	Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC)	2012	2024	3
	Polar Security Cutter (PSC)	2018	2025	4
	Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC)	2024	2024	0
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)	2004	2024	8
	Biometric Entry-Exit Program (BE-E)	2018	2025	3
	Light Enforcement Platform (LEP)	2025	2025	0
	Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH)	2016	2022	2
	Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA)	2016	2025	3

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Most Programs Have Delayed Their Planned Delivery of Full Capabilities

Twelve of DHS’s 19 baselined programs have delayed their full operational capability (FOC) dates since setting them in initial APBs due to reasons both within and outside of program control.

- **Contracting and technical challenges.** Multiple programs had to change their FOC dates because of challenges with contracting and design. For example, since establishing its baseline in 2016,

the Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology program declared three schedule breaches and one cost breach. As a result, the program delayed its FOC date by 6 years. Program officials attributed these breaches to a variety of factors such as delays in awarding contracts, technical challenges, and high-risk design, among other things.

In July 2025, Coast Guard's OPC program declared a schedule breach. Subsequently, after multiple contractor-related challenges, the Coast Guard terminated for default the OPC 3 and 4 portions of the contract, while OPC 1 delivery has slipped by more than 5 years.¹⁷ Since originally establishing their baseline in 2012, the program's FOC date is now behind over 6 years due to ongoing schedule changes. Additionally, while some testing will be done on OPC 1, initial operational testing will now be completed on OPC 2 by June 2029.

Coast Guard's PSC program delayed its lead ship delivery and FOC date due in part to the contractor's failure to maintain the PSC design schedule. We previously reported on delays to construction from design immaturity, with functional design not completed even 5 years after the Coast Guard awarded the contract.¹⁸ Program officials said that the schedule delays are attributable to several factors, including the lack of U.S. shipbuilding expertise for designing and constructing heavy polar icebreakers, the complexity of and changes to the design, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the program's planned activities.

- **External challenges.** In other instances programs changed their FOC dates due to external challenges. For example, the Coast Guard's Long Range Surveillance program delayed its FOC date over 6 years due to funding challenges. Program officials told us the delay was primarily the result of the Coast Guard's prioritization of funding requests for ship programs. Additionally, FEMA's Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) program delayed its FOC date by over 2 years. FOC is now

¹⁷GAO, *Offshore Patrol Cutter: Coast Guard Should Gain Key Knowledge Before Buying More Ships*, [GAO-26-107583](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 25, 2025).

¹⁸GAO, *DHS Annual Assessment: Improved Guidance on Revised Acquisition Goals Would Enhance Transparency*, [GAO-25-107317](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 25, 2025).

planned in December 2026 due to downstream COVID-19-related construction delays, among other reasons.

- **Redefined FOC.** Some programs extended their FOC dates to acquire additional quantities or capabilities. The Coast Guard’s NSC program delayed its FOC date by nearly 14 years, partially due to an increase from eight cutters, as originally planned, to 11 cutters, as congressionally directed. According to officials, DHS approved an administrative update to the program’s APB in December 2025. The Coast Guard descoped NSC 11 from the contract, and FOC is now scheduled for September 2027. Similarly, CBP’s Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH) program rebaselined in 2022 to increase quantities from 20 aircraft to 35, looking to retire aging aircraft and standardize on a more current model. The program now expects to achieve FOC in 2028, a 6-year change. CISA’s Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) program changed its expected FOC from 2018 to 2026 because significant additional capabilities were added after the program set initial goals.

For a full list of planned FOC milestones, see table 3.

Table 3: DHS’s 19 Baselined Programs and Adjustments to Planned Full Operational Capability (FOC) Dates

Component	Program	Increment/segment	Initial FOC date	Current FOC date	Difference (in months)
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM)		June 2018	September 2026	99
	Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1	Increment 1	June 2017	October 2018	15
		Increment 2	December 2019	December 2022	35
		Increment 3	December 2025	December 2025	0
DHS Management Directorate (MGMT)	Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART)	Program Increment 1	September 2021	September 2027	72
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI)		December 2028	December 2028	0
	Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS)		September 2024	December 2026 ^a	27

Component	Program	Increment/segment	Initial FOC date	Current FOC date	Difference (in months)
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS)	Increment 1	September 2025	September 2023	-24
	Credential Authentication Technology (CAT)	PreCheck/Standard Lanes Program	September 2022	September 2049	324
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS)		March 2027	September 2033	77
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	Increment 1	March 2032	March 2032	0
		Increment 2	March 2034	March 2034	0
	Medium Range Surveillance (MRS) Aircraft (HC-144B & HC-27J)	HC-144B	September 2016	August 2024	94
		HC-27J	March 2025	September 2028	41
	National Security Cutter (NSC)		September 2014	September 2027	156
	Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC)		March 2034	September 2040	77
	Polar Security Cutter (PSC)		September 2029	March 2039	114
	Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC)		September 2034	September 2034	0
	U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)		September 2024	November 2023
Biometric Entry-Exit Program (BE-E)		Air Segment	September 2021	July 2021	-2
		Sea Segment	December 2025	September 2025	-3
Light Enforcement Platform (LEP)		Rotary Wing	June 2047	June 2047	0
Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH)			September 2022	September 2028	72
Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA)		Marine Interdiction	December 2018	March 2019	3
		Air Interdiction	September 2025	August 2023	-25
	Land Interdiction	June 2033	June 2033	0	

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: Grey rows indicate event has already occurred.

^aIPAWS schedule baseline is undergoing updates and program officials anticipate changing the current FOC date.

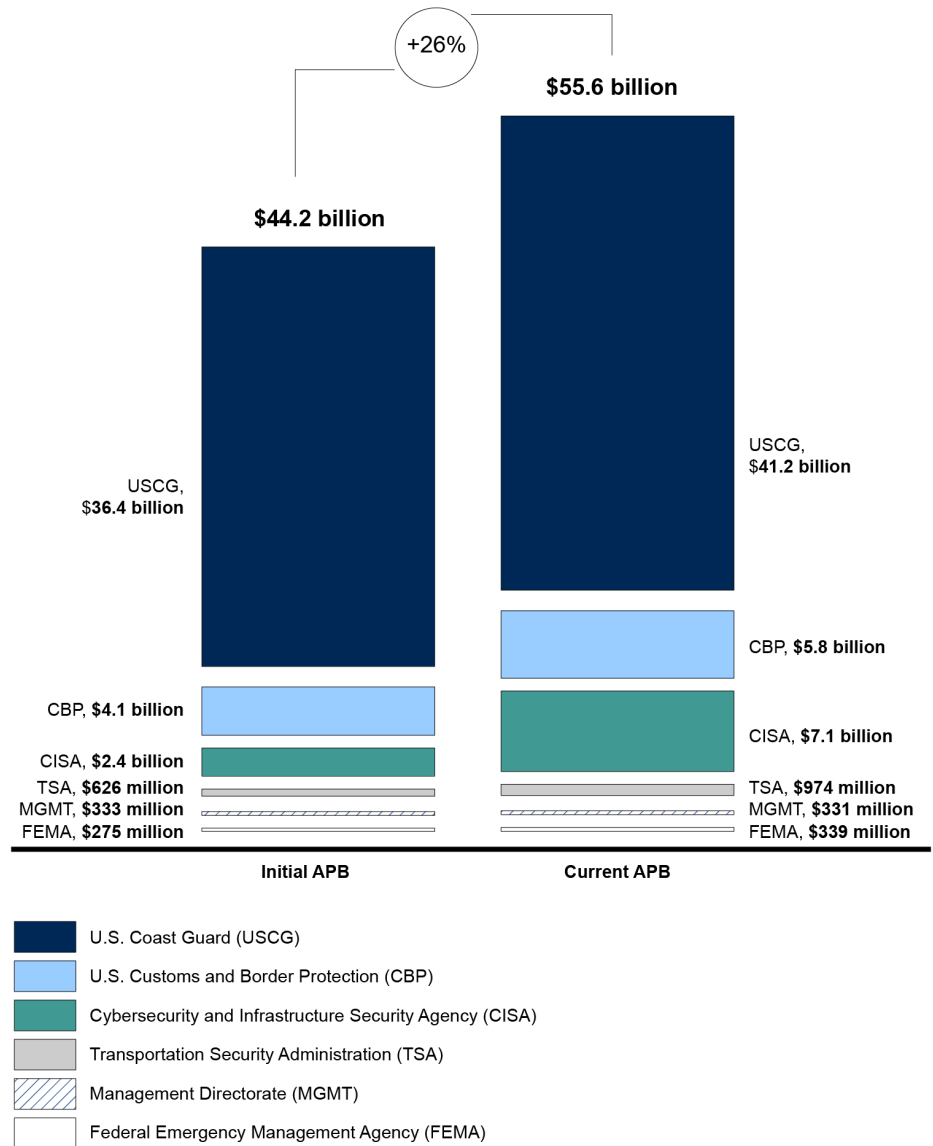
Planned Program Costs Have Increased Since Initial Goals

While most of the 19 baselined programs we reviewed are meeting their current cost goals, their total projected cost has collectively increased by approximately \$11.4 billion since programs set their initial goals.¹⁹ This increase is similar in scale to what we found in our 2024 annual assessment.²⁰ Figure 2 depicts the combined cost increases for the 19 programs with established goals.

¹⁹To conduct this analysis, for each program, we compared the first APB approved by DHS against the most recent APB approved by DHS. Prior to May 2019, DHS acquisition management policy required programs to establish the first DHS-approved APB with goals that can be breached at ADE 2A. In May 2019, DHS updated its acquisition management policy to require programs to instead establish the first APB with goals that can be breached at ADE 2B.

²⁰GAO, *DHS Annual Assessment: Improved Guidance on Revised Acquisition Goals Would Enhance Transparency*, [GAO-25-107317](#) (Washington, D.C.: February 25, 2025).

Figure 2: Acquisition Costs by Component for DHS’s 19 Baselined Programs from Initial to Current Baselines (in Fiscal Year 2024 Dollars)



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: To conduct this analysis, for each program, GAO compared the first acquisition program baseline (APB) approved by DHS against the most recent APB approved by DHS. Prior to May 2019, DHS acquisition management policy required programs to establish the first DHS-approved APB with goals that can be breached at ADE 2A. In May 2019, DHS updated its acquisition management policy to require programs to instead establish the first APB with goals that could be breached at ADE 2B. All numbers presented are in fiscal year 2024 dollars and may not match directly with original APB values.

Three programs—CISA’s CDM program and Coast Guard’s NSC and OPC programs—accounted for the majority of this cost increase. Projected costs for the CDM program grew by \$4 billion, while NSC and OPC grew by \$3.5 billion and \$2 billion, respectively. In the case of the CDM program, the cost growth reflected the addition of capability requirements and additional functionality to the cybersecurity program, while the NSC cost growth primarily resulted from adding three more ships than originally baselined.²¹ In contrast, OPC costs grew because of design instability, awarding a contract to a second shipbuilder, hurricane damage, and increased infrastructure cost.

Selected Programs Made Progress Achieving Milestones and Face Dynamic Environment

The 27 major acquisition programs in our review continued to achieve planned milestones throughout fiscal year 2025. Further, of programs that began testing, nine were meeting all KPPs in fiscal year 2025. However, DHS faces a dynamic environment, due in part to the significant amount of additional funding provided through the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act; concerns about reduced staff levels and loss of subject matter expertise; the ongoing revisions to acquisition management policy; and organizational changes such as the approval to dissolve PARM, the office responsible for the overall acquisition program governance process.

Selected Programs Achieved Milestones but Face Risks Due to Ongoing Staff Uncertainties

Twelve of the 27 major acquisition programs we reviewed achieved a major milestone in fiscal year 2025. CBP’s Cross Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT) program achieved initial operational capability (IOC) for two of its segments. This required the program to install 6 miles of its surveillance detection system along the border and install two mobile detection toolkits. Additionally, the Coast Guard’s Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker (CAPI) program declared IOC in fiscal year 2025 after commissioning the program’s sole ship, the Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*. Table 4 identifies milestones achieved by selected programs in fiscal year 2025 and notes milestones planned for fiscal year 2026.

²¹Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-141 (2018); 164 Cong. Rec. H2045, H2555 (Mar. 22, 2018) (explanatory statement of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018).

Table 4: Achieved Milestones in Fiscal Year 2025 and Planned Milestones in Fiscal Year 2026 for Selected DHS Programs

Component	Program	Major milestone achieved in fiscal year 2025	Major milestone planned in fiscal year 2026
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM)	-	Acquisition Decision Event (ADE) 3 August 2026 Full Operational Capability (FOC) September 2026
	Cyber Analytic and Data System (CADS)	ADE R1 ^a November 2024 Initial Operational Capability (IOC) June 2025	ADE R2 ^a December 2025
	CyberSentry	-	ADE R1 ^a June 2026
	Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1	ADE 3 (Increment 3) September 2025	FOC (Increment 3) December 2025
DHS Management Directorate (MGMT)	Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART)	-	Program IOC September 2026
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI)	ADE 2B November 2024	IOC September 2026
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker (CAPI)	ADE 2B May 2025 ADE 2C May 2025 IOC August 2025	-
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	IOC (Increment 2) May 2025	-
	Polar Security Cutter (PSC)	ADE 2C April 2025 Critical Design Review April 2025	-
	Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC)	ADE 2C (Segment 1) April 2025	-
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)	ADE 3 December 2024	-
	Biometric Entry-Exit (BE-E)	ADE 2A/3 and FOC (Sea Segment) September 2025	-
	Cross Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT)	IOC (PSD) April 2025 IOC (MDTT) June 2025	ADE 2B (CBTT) March 2026 ADE 3 (CBTT) September 2026
	Light Enforcement Platform (LEP)	ADE 2B September 2025	-
	Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA)	ADE 2B (land interdiction) March 2025	-
	Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration Program (NII-I)	-	ADE 2B March 2026

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: The following programs included in our review were not included in this table because they did not achieve a major milestone in fiscal year 2025 and did not have a major milestone scheduled for fiscal year 2026 as of September 30, 2025: Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS), Credential Authentication Technology (CAT), Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS), Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft (MRS), National Security Cutter (NSC), Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN PS) Phase 2, Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), Common Operating Picture (COP), Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST), Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1, and Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH).

^aADE R1 and R2 under the Rapid Acquisition Life Cycle Framework approximates ADE 2B and full operational capability, respectively, of the standard acquisition life-cycle framework under DHS Acquisition Management Instruction 102-01-001 as of September 30, 2025.

A majority of the programs in our scope identified risks to achieving planned milestones in future years, in part due to uncertainties involving staff and the loss of expertise. For example, 14 of these programs from CBP, FEMA, CISA, TSA, and the Management Directorate said the risks included uncertainty around staff. Our analysis of workforce information provided by the programs found that staff levels for eight programs decreased by at least 20 percent from October 2024 to September 2025. The decrease in staff included a mix of terminated probationary employees, deferred resignations, and retirements. Examples of program-cited schedule risks from reduced staff include the loss of subject matter experts and technical skills. These officials added they expect schedule delays and face risks of not being able to execute program goals. Similarly, we have previously found that program uncertainties can lead to cost and schedule challenges.²² In contrast, while half the Coast Guard programs identified potential schedule risks, none attributed them to staff uncertainties.

Acquisition Cost Grew 1 Percent Over the Past Year as Programs Changed Capabilities and Quantities

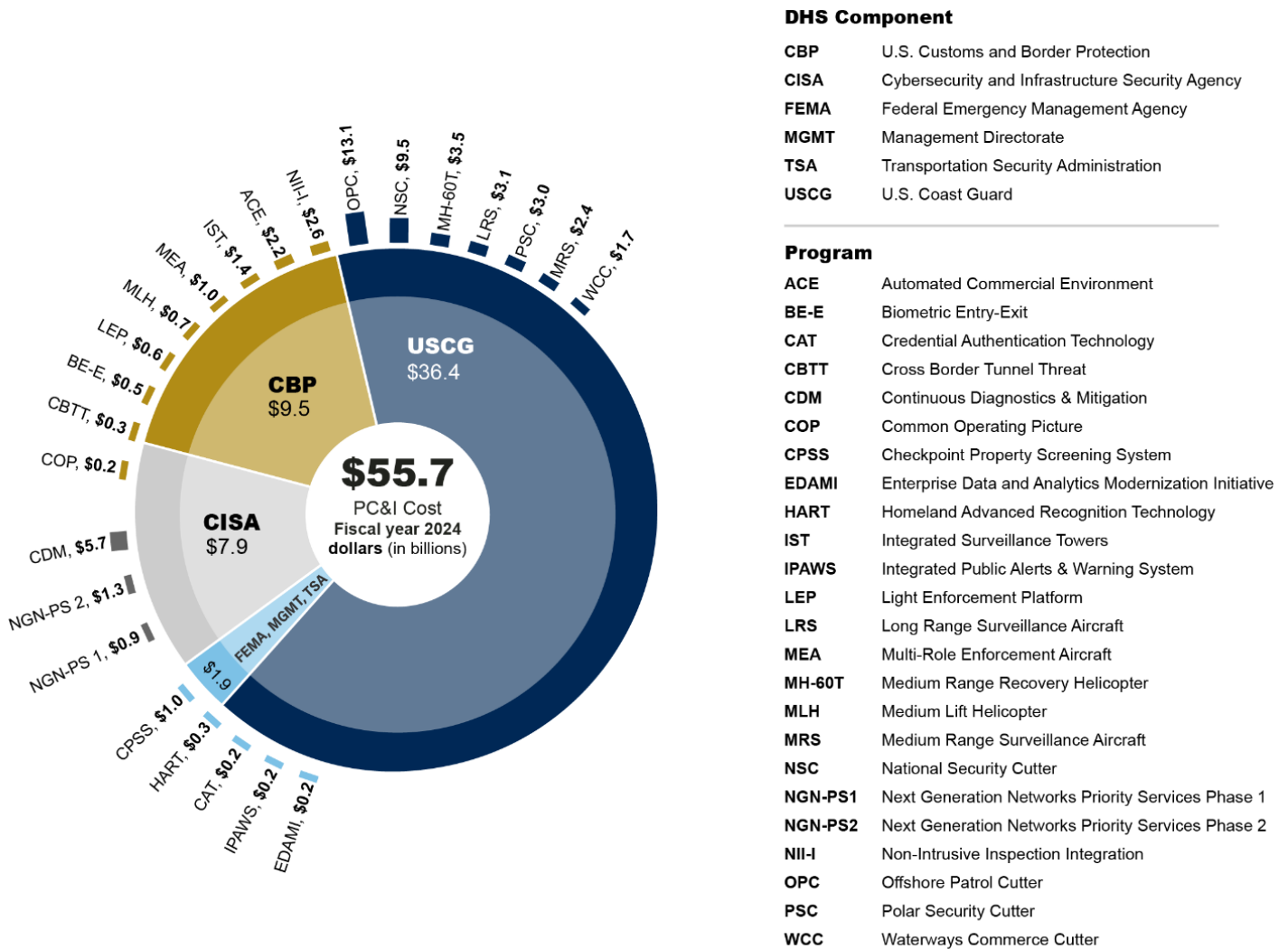
By the end of fiscal year 2025, total estimated acquisition costs for the 24 programs that had an approved life-cycle cost estimate amounted to almost \$56 billion, or a growth of about 1 percent since our 2024 report.²³ Coast Guard acquisitions accounted for 65 percent of that estimated total, with one Coast Guard program—OPC—accounting for about 24 percent of the total. Life-cycle cost estimates include acquisition costs over the life cycle of a program, which may cover decades. Figure 3 groups the 24

²²GAO, *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Developing and Managing Program Costs*, [GAO-20-195G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 12, 2020); GAO *Schedule Assessment Guide: Best Practices for Project Schedules*, [GAO-16-89G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 22, 2015).

²³Of the 27 DHS programs in our scope, we included the 24 programs with an approved life-cycle cost estimate. While a life-cycle cost estimate includes both costs to acquire the capabilities, and the costs to operate and maintain them, we only focus on acquisition costs for our analysis. We excluded from our analysis three program that did not have an approved life-cycle cost estimate: Cyber Analytic and Data System (CADS), CyberSentry, and Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker (CAPI).

programs by their responsible components and identifies the estimated acquisition costs for each program, the total acquisition costs for each component, and the DHS total.

Figure 3: Fiscal Year 2025 Estimated Acquisition Costs for Selected DHS Major Acquisition Programs by Program



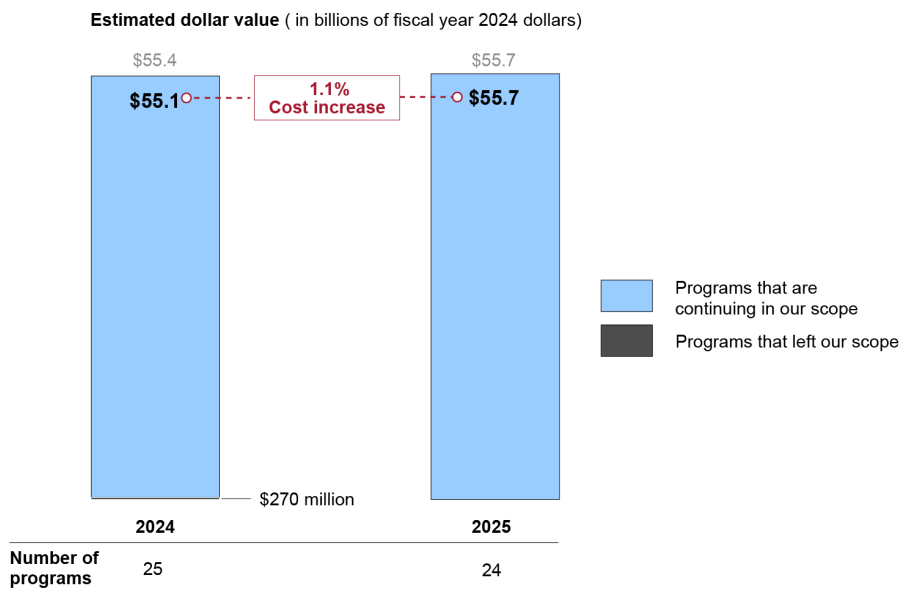
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: Programs included in this analysis were those with an approved life-cycle cost estimate in GAO's scope. Programs develop a life-cycle cost estimate to support Acquisition Decision Event 2A before they have an approved initial acquisition program baseline. While a life-cycle cost estimate includes both acquisition, also known as procurement, construction, and investment (PC&I), and operations costs, also known as operations and support (O&S), we only include acquisition costs for our analysis. GAO excluded the Cyber Analytic and Data System (CADS), CyberSentry, and

Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker (CAPI) programs from this analysis because they did not have an approved estimate. For a few programs in this analysis, estimated costs include amounts for multiple segments, some of which are preliminary. All values presented are in fiscal year 2024 dollars, which may not match values presented in other DHS documentation.

While the collective costs of DHS major acquisition programs remained relatively stable, individual programs experienced greater variation. Twelve programs accounted for a combined cost increase of approximately \$1.1 billion, while another five programs saw a combined cost decrease of approximately \$540 million. For example, the estimate for the Medium Range Surveillance (MRS) Aircraft program decreased by \$331 million after the Coast Guard canceled the program’s second segment, although Coast Guard officials estimate that approximately \$360 million had already been spent on that effort. At the same time, TSA’s Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS) and Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) programs estimated costs increased by approximately \$400 million, or 50 percent, because the programs plan to purchase additional quantities. Figure 4 shows how estimated program costs have changed since last year, and the impact of one program leaving our review on last year’s combined estimated costs.

Figure 4: Estimated Acquisition Cost Change for Selected DHS Major Acquisition Programs, 2024 to 2025



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: The program that left our scope between fiscal year 2024 and 2025 was the Grants Management Modernization (GMM) program. Programs in our scope with continuing acquisition cost estimates include Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), Biometric Entry-Exit (BE-E), Cross

Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT), Common Operating Picture (COP), Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST), Light Enforcement Platform (LEP), Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA), Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH), Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration (NII-I), Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM), Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 1 (NGN-PS1), Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 2 (NGN-PS2), Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative (EDAMI), Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART), Credential Authentication Technology (CAT), Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS), Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS), Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T), Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft (MRS), National Security Cutter (NSC), Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), Polar Security Cutter (PSC), Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC).

Programs That Started Testing Are Making Progress

By the end of fiscal year 2025, nine programs demonstrated through testing that they met all their performance goals, also known as key performance parameters (KPP). This includes CISA’s Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1 program, which is now meeting all of its KPPs following the completion of testing for increment 3. Three other programs met at least one KPP. Of note, TSA’s Checkpoint Property Screening System program is not meeting its KPP for cyber resilience for two screening system configurations. TSA officials said the remaining configurations continue to meet all KPPs, and that they are working with vendors to mitigate concerns for the affected configurations. The remaining 15 programs in our selected sample have not yet started testing. The CDM, CyberSentry, CBTT, and Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft programs plan to conduct testing in fiscal year 2026.

Table 5: Status of DHS Programs That Have Met At Least One Key Performance Parameter (KPP) as of September 2025

Component	Program	Completed operational test and evaluation	Program has met at least one KPP	Program has met all KPPs	Change since the previous year
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)	✓	✓	✓	None
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS) ^a	✓	✓	—	Change from meeting 4 of 4 KPPs to meeting 3 of 4 KPPs
	Credential Authentication Technology (CAT)	✓	✓	✓	None
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	Next Generation Network Priority Services (NGN-PS) Phase 1	✓	✓	✓	Testing complete, met all KPPs
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS)	✓	✓	✓	None

Component	Program	Completed operational test and evaluation	Program has met at least one KPP	Program has met all KPPs	Change since the previous year
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T) ^b	—	✓	✓	None
	Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft (MRS) ^c	—	✓	—	None
	National Security Cutter (NSC)	✓	✓	✓	None
U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)	Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)	✓	✓	✓	None
	Biometric Entry-Exit (BE-E)	✓	✓	✓	Testing complete
	Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH) ^b	—	✓	✓	None
	Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA) ^d	—	✓	—	None

Legend: ✓ = yes; — = no

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) information. | GAO-26-108118

^aCPSS is not meeting their KPP for cyber resilience for two screening system configurations. TSA officials said they are working with vendors to mitigate concerns for the affected configurations.

^bOperational test and evaluation for the MH-60T and MLH programs occurred previously in relation to a different program or under a different acquisition level. Specifically, for the MH-60T, Coast Guard officials said the program's KPPs were being met based on 25 years of operational data, and no operational testing is planned, as no new capabilities have been identified. For MLH, CBP determined the KPPs were met based on operational testing conducted in fiscal years 2012 and 2014, prior to the program's designation as a major acquisition.

^cThe HC-144 segment of the MRS program completed operational assessment. However, due to the HC-27J discontinuation, the MRS program will not assess KPPs for the HC-27J and has no operational testing planned.

^dMEA has completed testing and met KPPs for its air and maritime segments. The land segment has not yet started testing.

Programs Received Significant Additional Funds from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act

As part of the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act, DHS received over \$191 billion to support its missions, including funding to acquire capabilities for major acquisition programs. Two programs, the Border Wall System

Program (Border Wall) and Arctic Security Cutter, collectively received approximately \$50 billion.²⁴

Two of the six components in our scope, CBP and Coast Guard, expect to receive 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act funds. Of the 27 programs in our review, 12 programs from CBP and Coast Guard expect to receive at least a combined \$14.3 billion from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act. Most CBP programs reported they expect at least a combined \$2.1 billion for acquiring capabilities, and a majority of the Coast Guard programs received at least \$12.2 billion combined to acquire cutters and aviation assets. CISA, TSA, FEMA, and the Management Directorate programs reported not expecting any 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act funds. Those programs that expect additional funds reported a variety of planned uses for the money. Among the reported uses were procuring additional units or accelerating the already planned procurement of units on a faster timeline. Table 6 showcases both program-reported amounts received from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act, as well as amounts for programs mentioned by name in the legislation.

Table 6: 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act Funding by Selected DHS Major Acquisition Program

Component	Program	Program reported funds/received funding identified in legislation	Dollar amount
U.S. Coast Guard	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	Program Reported Funds	\$2.3 billion
	Long Range Surveillance Aircraft (LRS)	Program Reported Funds	\$1.14 billion
	Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC)	Funding Identified in Legislation	\$4.3 billion
	Polar Security Cutter (PSC)	Funding Identified in Legislation	\$4.3 billion
	Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC)	Funding Identified in Legislation	\$162 million
U.S. Customs and Border Protection	Biometric Entry-Exit (BE-E)	Program Reported Funds	\$613 million
	Air and Marine Operations Programs ^a	Program Reported Funds	Approximately \$220 million

²⁴At the start of this review, when selecting programs for individual assessment, GAO was informed that the Border Wall System Program was a level 3 non-major acquisition program centered on the Rio Grande Valley. The Arctic Security Cutter program was not yet included as a program of record on the January 2025 Major Acquisition Oversight List. As such, neither was included in our broader analysis.

Component	Program	Program reported funds/received funding identified in legislation	Dollar amount
	Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration Program (NII-I)	Program Reported Funds	Portion of \$1.04 billion
	Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST)	Program Reported Funds	Approximately \$1 billion
	Cross Border Tunnel Threat (CBTT)	Program Reported Funds	\$250 million
		Total^b	At least \$14.3 billion

Source: GAO analysis of 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act and program information. | GAO-26-108118

Note: No other programs in our review reported either receiving funds as part of the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act or had specific call outs in the legislation.

^aSpecific funding amounts for individual Air and Marine Operations programs were omitted because the information was deemed sensitive by CBP officials.

^bTotal does not include funding amounts for the NII-I program, as program officials were unsure of the exact amount NII-I would receive.

In addition to the 27 programs in our review, the Border Wall and Arctic Security Cutter also received significant funding from the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act.²⁵

- **CBP’s Border Wall Systems Program** received \$46.6 billion, which is more than what most of the 27 programs in our review cost combined. According to program officials, CBP awarded the first 10 contracts using 2025 Reconciliation Budget Act funds in fiscal year 2025 and intends to award all construction contracts by June 2026. Officials said the Border Wall System Program used an existing indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract with a total capacity of \$20.5 billion to make these awards. Officials said they established a second contract of the same type with a capacity of \$37 billion, in September 2025. Officials stated they plan to issue four solicitations for contracts per month through May 2026, for a total of 34 projects. The Border Wall planned to use the last of their prior year funds in fiscal year 2025 to support construction of approximately 96 miles of additional border barrier.
- **Arctic Security Cutter** received \$3.5 billion in the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act. In October 2025, a presidential memorandum

²⁵We covered the Border Wall Systems Program most recently in our fiscal year 2023 review. Please see GAO, *DHS Annual Assessment: Most Programs Are Meeting Current Goals, but Some Continue to Face Cost and Schedule Challenges*, [GAO-24-106573](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 22, 2024).

determined the need for the U.S. to procure Arctic Security Cutters with up to four cutters from foreign shipyards. In December 2025, the Coast Guard reported that it awarded a contract to Rauma Marine Constructions Oy of Finland for up to two cutters, and another to Bollinger Shipyards Lockport for up to four cutters. Bollinger is also the shipbuilder for the PSC program which we have previously reported on.²⁶ In February 2026, the Coast Guard announced it had awarded an additional contract to Davie Defense, Inc. for up to five cutters of which two will be built at Helsinki Shipyard in Finland and three will be built in the United States.

We expect to include both the Border Wall and the Arctic Security Cutter in next year's assessment.

DHS Made Organizational Changes Related to Acquisition Management and Oversight

DHS made a significant change to its acquisition management and oversight structure in October 2025. At that time, DHS approved a memorandum dissolving PARM stating that the dissolution would reduce redundancy and improve acquisition oversight efficiency.²⁷ This recent change is similar to others that we have previously reported on, such as the dissolution of the Joint Requirements Council in 2024. As previously mentioned, PARM was responsible for the overall acquisition program governance process which we previously found bolstered the application of acquisition policy through well-documented decision making, and by offering guidance to support various processes.

DHS is spreading former PARM responsibilities throughout the Management Directorate, which, according to DHS officials, as of January 2026, is still in process. For example, DHS officials said that the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer would now be responsible for tracking major and non-major acquisition programs. However, officials were unsure which DHS office would be determining if a program breaches its cost and schedule baseline goals. They also stated that the responsibility for overseeing requirements development will now primarily be with the Component Requirements Executives in each component. However, it is unclear how or if DHS plans to perform all of the acquisition oversight functions that PARM had performed, when that transition of

²⁶GAO, *Coast Guard Acquisitions: Further Cost and Affordability Analysis of Polar Fleet Needed*, [GAO-25-106822](#) (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 19, 2024).

²⁷According to DHS officials, as of May 2026, DHS's Office of the Chief Procurement Officer was in the process of standing up a division focused on acquisition program management—one of PARMs former responsibilities. We have an ongoing review of DHS's acquisition oversight organization since the dissolution of PARM.

responsibilities might occur, and to what extent DHS will have a role in overseeing requirements development at the component level in the future.

As part of our High-Risk Series, we previously identified acquisition management as an area needing management attention at DHS, but in 2023 we determined that DHS had made sufficient progress in addressing acquisition-related issues to warrant its removal.²⁸ For example, DHS had

- ensured compliance with acquisition documentation,
- implemented oversight mechanisms to monitor program progress,
- established a recurring process to assess the acquisition workforce, and
- implemented policies to help the Joint Requirements Council (the Council)—a component led council that oversaw emerging capability gaps and existing requirements—fulfill its roles and responsibilities.

In August 2024, DHS suspended the Council’s operations and related policies in response to the joint explanatory statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, which instructed DHS to dissolve the Council. To replace the Council, DHS began crafting a new requirements development process that DHS officials stated was planned to be managed within PARM.

We will continue to monitor DHS’s updated acquisition oversight and requirements development structures.

²⁸GAO, *High-Risk Series: Efforts Made to Achieve Progress Need to Be Maintained and Expanded to Fully Address All Areas*, [GAO-23-106203](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 20, 2023). DHS remains on our high-risk list in the areas of IT and financial management. Our High-Risk Series reports on government operations that we have identified as having serious weaknesses in areas involving substantial resources and providing critical services to the public.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DHS for review and comment. DHS provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Homeland Security. In addition, the report will be made available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at masterst@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Media Relations may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

//SIGNED//

Travis J. Masters

Director, Contracting and National Security Acquisitions

List of Committees

The Honorable Rand Paul, M.D.
Chairman
The Honorable Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Katie Britt
Chair
The Honorable Chris Murphy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Andrew Garbarino
Chairman
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
House of Representatives

The Honorable Mark Amodei
Chairman
The Honorable Henry Cuellar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Program Assessments

This appendix presents individual assessments for the 27 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) major acquisition programs we reviewed. Cost data for each assessment is current as of September 2025. Schedule data has been reviewed by DHS as of January 2026. Similarly, in instances where significant updates occurred after September 2025, we included that information and indicated the relevant date.

The assessments include standard elements such as: an image, a program description, summaries of the program's progress in meeting cost and schedule goals, and key program information such as its contracting approach. In addition, the assessments provide summaries of the program execution, performance and testing activities, and program management-related issues, as applicable.

Additionally, we have provided information on Public Law 119-21—also known as the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act or the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)—where applicable in these assessments.¹ These amounts are not yet reflected in the acquisition program baseline and current cost estimate graphic, but are included in the text. Further, in June 2025, DHS issued guidance requiring Secretary-level approval of all contract obligations valued at \$100,000 or more before award is made. We included information about this review where applicable in the assessments.

The information presented in these assessments was obtained from DHS documentation, answers to our questionnaire by DHS officials, and interviews with DHS and program officials. It also includes our analysis of program information. Assessments are 2 pages in length, with exceptions for programs that met full operational capability (FOC) after audit initiation, were pre-acquisition decision event (ADE) 2A at audit initiation, are new to this year's report, or are part of the DHS rapid acquisition pathway. Each assessment includes the following elements:

- **Program description.**
- **Program information:**
 - **Component.** Which of the six components in our scope the program falls under.

¹An Act To provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Pub. L. No. 119-21 (2025).

- **Acquisition type.** Whether a capital asset program is for an IT acquisition as defined by DHS, a non-IT acquisition, or a mixed acquisition that includes IT and non-IT.
- **Acquisition level.** Whether a program is level 1 (has a life-cycle cost estimate (LCCE) of \$1 billion or more) or level 2 (LCCE is from \$300 million to less than \$1 billion).
- **Key performance parameter (KPP) status.** Provides the breakout of the program's current total number of KPPs by whether the programs reported those KPPs as met. If testing for the program's KPPs has not begun, that is stated.
- **Prime contractor, number of prime contractors, or servicing agency.** Names the program's prime contractor(s), or gives the number of prime contractors if there are more than five. For programs using another federal agency to acquire products or services, names the service or office that does so. For this field, we used information from the program as well as independently reviewed Federal Procurement Data System data and other information.
- **Contracting approach.** Includes high-level information and summaries of the kind of contracting activities the program is conducting or planning. For this field, we used information from the program as well as independently reviewed Federal Procurement Data System data and other information.
- **Life-cycle path:** Indicates which tailoring path of the Systems Engineering Life Cycle Framework, per DHS Instruction 102-01-103, the program uses. These include:
 - Incremental software development: designed for IT programs with software development elements that deliver capabilities in increments.
 - System/Product Development: addresses tailoring for large and small product development projects that require significant developmental or engineering effort.
 - Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Items with No Integration Required: addresses self-contained hardware or software items that provide needed functionality (e.g., system capability) as-is, without modifications.
 - Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Items with Integration: addresses the integration of Commercial Off-the-Shelf or Non-Developmental Items

with existing or legacy hardware or software, or other Commercial Off-the-Shelf or Non-Developmental Items as part of a larger system.

- Rapid Acquisition: addresses the acquisition of mature capabilities in an expedited manner.
- **Next major milestone.** Indicates the program's next major event along with the estimated date, if known.
- **Key Findings.**
- **Graphics:**
 - **Schedule.** This figure consists of a timeline that identifies key acquisition decision events or other significant events for the program. The timeline identifies when the program completed or is expected to reach its major milestones. Dates shown are based on the program's acquisition program baseline (APB) threshold dates, a signed acquisition decision memo showing completion of an event, or updates provided by the program office. The following milestones are intended to signify:
 - ADE 2A: when a program, or increment, enters into the obtain phase of the acquisition life cycle
 - ADE 2B: when a program's initial acquisition program baseline is approved
 - ADE 2C: when low-rate production, or incremental delivery, is approved
 - ADE 3: when full-rate production, or deployment, is approved
 - IOC: initial operational capability
 - FOC: full operational capability
 - **Acquisition program baseline and current estimate.** This figure compares the program's cost thresholds from the initial APB approved after DHS's acquisition management policy went into effect in November 2008 and the program's current DHS-approved APB to the program's expected costs as of September 2025. The source for the current estimate is DHS Cost Analysis Division data. Costs shown are based on the program's APB threshold costs and are presented in normalized fiscal year 2024 dollars. For consistency in reporting, we use the terms procurement, construction, and improvements (PC&I) or acquisitions when describing costs in

these assessments. We do not include operations and support (O&S) costs in our figure.

- **Selected milestone delay.** This figure compares the program's initial date for a selected milestone to its current estimated date for that milestone in months.

Lastly, each program assessment summarizes comments provided by the program office and identifies whether the program provided technical comments.

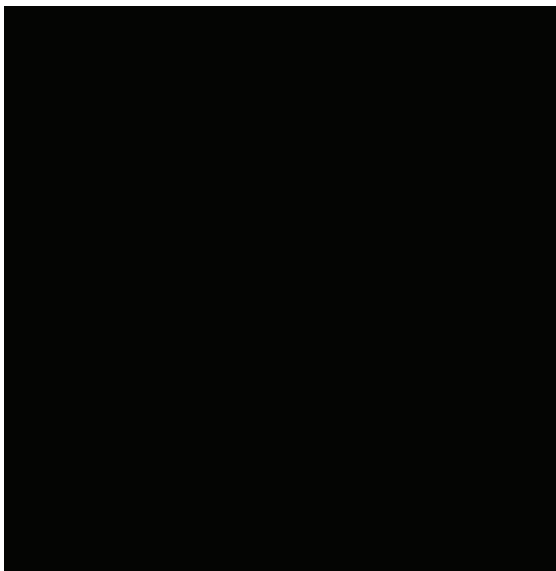
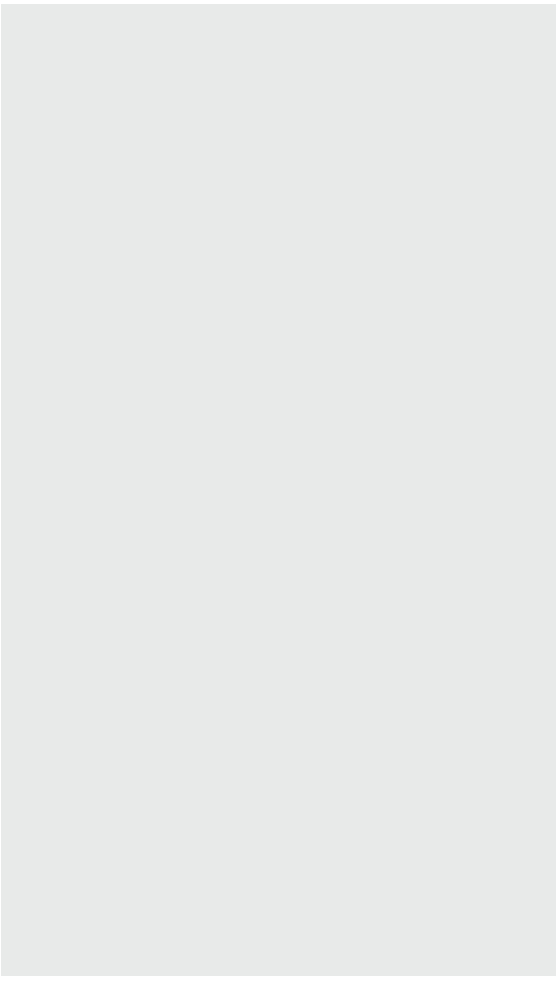
Additional abbreviations used on program assessments

DOT&E	Director, Office of Test and Evaluation
IOT&E	initial operational test and evaluation

Programs are grouped by component to provide consistency in reporting and ease of use for the reader.



Cybersecurity and **Infrastructure Security Agency**



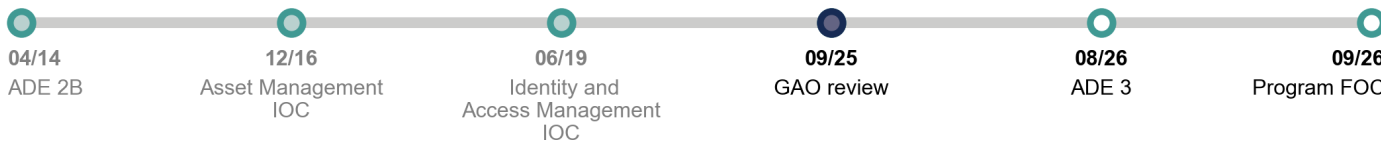
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Source: CISA. | GAO-26-108118

Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation

CDM aims to strengthen the cybersecurity of civilian government networks and data by providing four capabilities to federal agencies: (1) Asset Management reports vulnerabilities in hardware and software; (2) Identity and Access Management focuses on user access controls; (3) Network Security Management will report on efforts to prevent attacks; and (4) Data Protection Management will provide encryption to protect network data. Under CDM, DHS centrally oversees the procurement of cybersecurity tools that participating agencies can deploy. CDM is organized into segments for each capability.



Program Information

Component: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of 16 KPPs began in summer 2024.

Servicing Agencies: General Services Administration and Federal Acquisition Service

Contracting approach: CDM obtains services from a series of competitively awarded task orders against existing Multiple Award Schedule or government-wide acquisition contracts.

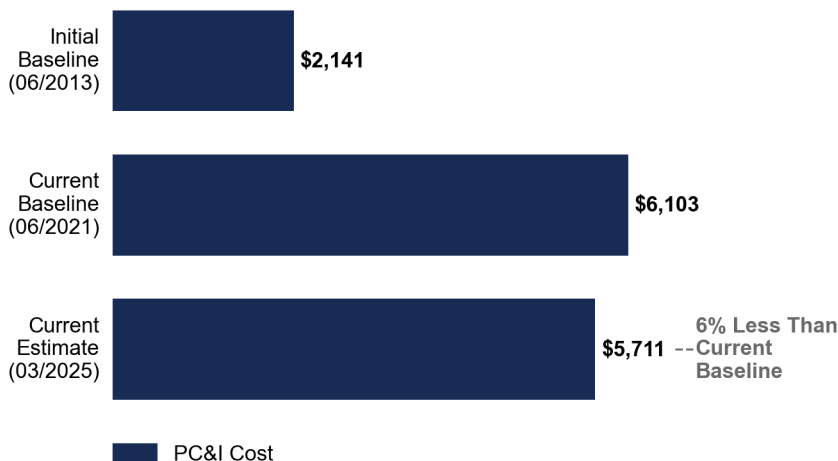
Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Item with Integration

Next major milestone: ADE 3 by August 2026

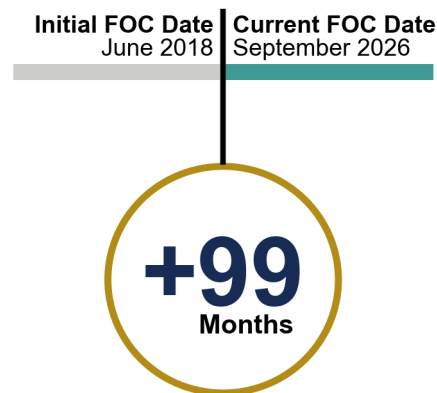
Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** CDM is updating its APB to include a new FOC definition. Program officials plan to complete the updates by September 2025 and do not expect it to change existing baseline schedule goals. CDM's estimated acquisition costs are currently \$5.7 billion, remaining within the program's current cost baseline. However, program officials plan to adjust cost baseline goals to reflect the addition of an Endpoint Detection and Response sub-capability.
- Performance and Testing.** Testing of the Asset Management capability occurred in summer 2024. Test results were generally positive, and recommended streamlining existing KPPs in part to align with the new FOC definition. According to officials, the lapse in appropriations and dissolution of PARM pushed initial operational test and evaluation from winter 2025, with a new date yet to be determined.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: New program capabilities were added after the original milestone date was set.

CONTINUOUS DIAGNOSTICS AND MITIGATION

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The CDM program established an initial baseline in 2013 and has revised it five times since then, for reasons such as adding new capabilities or expanding prior ones. The program achieved IOC for the Asset Management capability in 2016 and the Identity and Access Management capability in 2019. The program paused work on the Data Protection Management capability in 2022 to focus on changing cybersecurity priorities stemming from legislation passed in 2021 and an executive order. We previously reported on the CDM program in August 2020 ([GAO-20-598](#)) and June 2025 ([GAO-25-107470](#)). In August 2020 we made six recommendations to DHS; we closed these recommendations as implemented by April 2024. In June 2025, we made four recommendations to DHS, including that CISA should produce guidance to help external agencies better use some of CDM's capabilities and that CISA should update cloud asset management strategies. As of September 2025, all four of these recommendations remain open.

Cost and Schedule Status

Program officials stated that CDM is on track to achieve ADE 3 and FOC, albeit with a new definition, in 2026. Program officials stated they are revising the definition of FOC in the program baseline to address (1) a greater focus on the operational realities of how the CDM dashboard operates and is used, and (2) agency priorities on data collected. Program officials added that they do not anticipate changes to schedule goals, but are pursuing an administrative adjustment to the cost goals related to the Endpoint Detection and Response sub-capability. These officials expect to complete the update to cost goals and FOC definition by June 2026.

In March 2025, CDM updated its planned program life-cycle cost estimate to \$5.7 billion for acquisition costs. The program saw an increase in estimated costs as compared with the prior year, which program officials mostly attributed to inflation.

Performance and Testing

While the program achieved IOC for two capabilities in 2016 and 2019, the program has yet to successfully demonstrate that it has met any KPPs because of testing limitations. CISA officials said that the program cannot conduct operational testing of its capabilities on other agencies' networks without permission. This limits the program's ability to test KPPs. Program officials stated that, as of September 2025, the program did not have permission from any agency to conduct operational testing. Program officials had been negotiating for permission with external agencies to begin initial operational test and evaluation by the end of 2025, but stated the lapse in appropriations and the dissolution of PARM in October 2025 affected those plans and a new testing date has yet to be determined.

CDM began testing KPPs related to the Asset Management capability on DHS networks in summer 2024. CDM completed an operational assessment of the Asset Management capability in summer 2024 with a letter of assessment issued in April 2025. The system was found to be at moderate risk to being operationally

effective, low risk to being operationally suitable, and cyber resilience was not assessed. The independent test agent had recommendations resulting from the testing, including streamlining KPPs to make them more measurable and testable. As part of that testing, DHS user feedback reported the dashboard as useful, with one issue flagged that some users had problems downloading large data sets. We have previously found that leading companies collect user feedback to inform iterative improvements.

Program officials said that they finished revising the FOC definition, including streamlined KPPs, but were in process for approval of their updated operational requirements document which would incorporate these changes.

Program Management

One of the top program risks is external agencies making changes to CDM-provided software tools without coordinating with the CDM program. Program officials explained that when this happens it increases program costs and can affect operational data, as systems are no longer properly configured, resulting in increased work for the program. Another top risk relates to gaining proper external agency support to allow for operational testing. Program officials stated that while they have flexibility built into the operational testing schedule, the lack of external agency participation could lead to delays. The program has been communicating with external partners to build support for testing and lessen this risk.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The CDM program shared that efforts will continue to make CDM an indispensable tool for cybersecurity operations, both in CISA and with partner agencies. The program stated that future efforts will focus on coverage of operational technology and cloud native assets.



CyberSentry

CyberSentry is a threat detection and monitoring capability that tracks malicious activity affecting information technology and operational technology networks. To support functions critical to the health and safety of the United States, CISA partners with entities across nine critical infrastructure sectors to install and manage the capability. CyberSentry provides an additional layer of defense beyond the partner entities' existing security measures by leveraging government information and cybersecurity expertise. It also provides a shared opportunity for visibility, mitigation, and information exchange between and across partners.

Source: Microsoft PowerPoint Stock Image. | GAO-26-108118



09/25
GAO review



TBD
ADE R1



TBD
ADE R2

Program Information

Component: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: 6 KPPs established, operational testing expected to begin in fiscal year 2026.

Number of prime contractors: 7

Contracting approach: The CyberSentry program reports managing 7 contracts for various functions such as engineering and general acquisition management support.

Life-cycle path: Rapid Acquisition

Next major milestone: ADE-R1 (obtain phase) to be determined

Current Status

In July 2024, DHS designated the program as a rapid acquisition effort making it the second DHS program to use this framework. According to program officials, the maturity of the technology and the program's use of commercial off-the-shelf hardware and software made CyberSentry a good candidate for the rapid pathway.

The first major decision event in the rapid acquisition framework, known as R1, establishes cost and schedule goals as part of the preliminary acquisition program baseline. CyberSentry planned to reach R1 and enter the obtain phase of the rapid acquisition framework in June 2025, but chose to delay its next program decision event to fiscal year 2026 instead. Program officials attribute this schedule change to senior leadership direction and compliance with changes to the DHS acquisition manual. The program is working to determine future milestones.

In January 2026, program officials estimated a total PC&I cost of approximately \$155 million. According to program officials, they are completing an affordability analysis to account for budget constraints which could reduce the number of organizations the program can partner with. The program reported that it did not receive any OBBBA funding.

In July 2025, officials said the program had not yet undergone testing, but initial operational test and evaluation events are scheduled for fiscal year 2026 to evaluate the effectiveness, suitability, and resilience of the program.

As of August 2025, the program has partnered with 42 organizations across national critical functions such as emergency response systems and transportation, according to program officials. These officials stated that the program originally planned to partner with 57 organizations by the end of fiscal year 2026, but this number may change depending on final funding decisions. Without fully deploying its capabilities, program officials explained, the program will be unable to detect, deter, and respond to threats in real time across the critical infrastructure that supports national security, the economy, and public safety.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

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Cyber Analytic and Data System

CADS is composed of IT infrastructure and a digital environment for integrating and analyzing multiple data sets. Specifically, it is expected to provide the tools and capabilities required to support the detection, rapid identification, mitigation, and prevention of malicious cyber activity across CISA. The CADS program is building on capabilities originally developed under CISA's National Cybersecurity Protection System program, which was retired in July 2023.

Source: NCPS. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: KPPs not yet tested.

Prime contractor: Nightwing for development, operations, and maintenance

Contracting approach: The program reported managing 16 contracts—11 fewer than fiscal year 2024. According to program officials, they are evaluating all existing and planned contracts in response to recent DHS efficiency and reorganization efforts.

Life-cycle path: Rapid Acquisition

Next major milestone: ADE-R2 (produce/deploy/support and dispose phase) by December 2025

Current Status

In July 2023, CISA restructured its program for cyber intrusion detection and prevention, analytics, and information sharing and designated it CADS. CADS is the first major acquisition program to use DHS's rapid acquisition framework established in 2020.

The first major acquisition decision event in the rapid acquisition framework, known as R1, established CADS cost and schedule parameters as part of the preliminary acquisition program baseline. CADS officially received approval to enter the obtain phase in November 2024, a roughly 7-month slip from the original plan. Program officials attribute this slip to CADS being the first major acquisition program to use the rapid acquisition framework. Since R1, the program was scheduled to reach IOC by June 2025 and deliver a minimum viable product.

In its September 2024 preliminary acquisition baseline, CADS estimated a total acquisition cost of \$2.2 billion with an additional \$325 million per year through fiscal year 2034 in sustainment costs. According to officials, the program is currently reevaluating these estimates in preparation for the R2 milestone. They also reported that they did not receive any OBBBA funding.

CADS planned to reach the R2 milestone—approving production through disposal—by December 2025. Program officials told us, however, that upcoming changes to the DHS acquisition management directive are likely to affect the program's continuation on the rapid pathway, but it is too soon to know exactly how.

CADS also finalized its test and evaluation strategy in September 2024, which established program key performance parameters and testing plans. CADS planned to conduct initial operational testing by October 2025, but program officials said that this could not occur as a contract with the independent testing agent ended. DOT&E has not been notified if or when operational testing will be scheduled.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate. The program office stated that it will continue to work with the DHS Chief Acquisition Officer and the CISA Chief Acquisition Executive to evaluate and determine future Acquisition Decision Events required. Additionally, they maintain that the CADS program continues to design, develop, deliver, and sustain operational capabilities consistent with the program scope and mission needs.

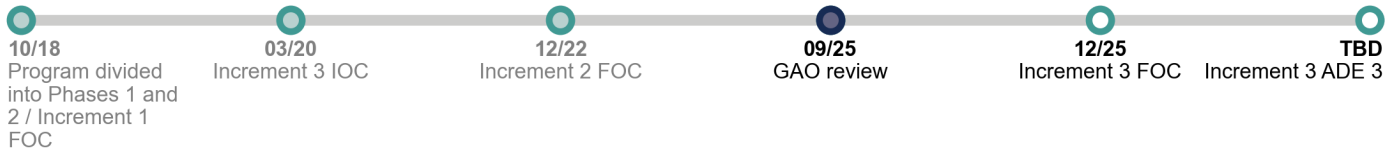
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Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 1

NGN-PS is a multi-phased program that aims to enhance emergency telecommunications services to ensure public safety personnel can communicate during emergency response and recovery operations. Phase 1 consists of three increments that are developing and deploying priority voice access on: (1) internet protocol core networks; (2) wireless and secure mobile communications over internet protocol; and (3) wired capability over internet protocol. All three increments of Phase 1 are covered in this assessment.

Source: DHS. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: 6 out of 6 KPPs met.

Servicing agency: Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization (DITCO)

Contracting approach: The program has an interagency agreement with DITCO to award contracts to three major telecommunications service providers. These providers develop and deploy priority access capabilities on their public networks.

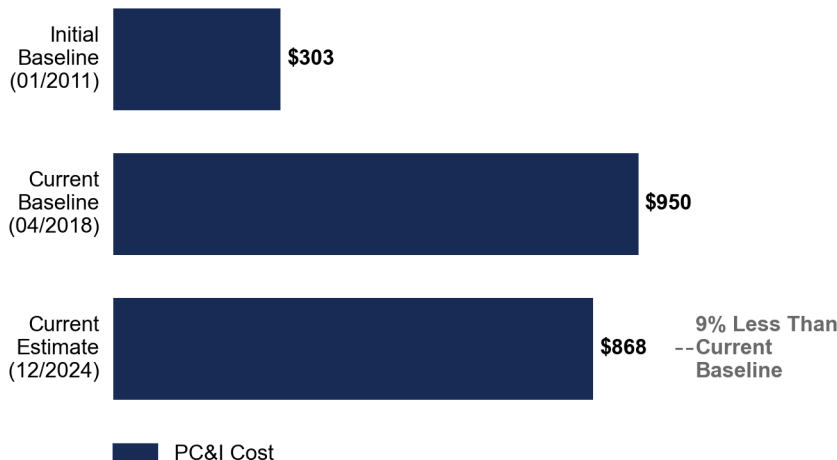
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: Increment 3 FOC by December 2025

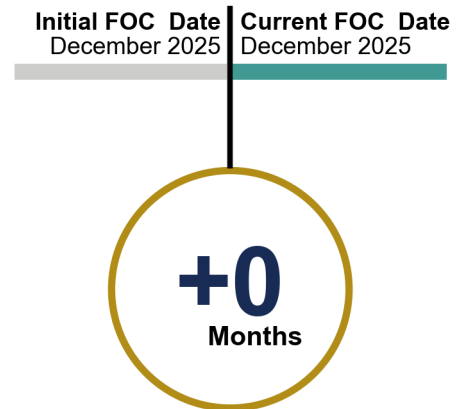
Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** The program's updated cost estimate is within its current baseline goals. Only increment 3 remains to be completed, which CISA officials said declared FOC in October 2025. However, the program terminated or did not extend several contracts in response to recent executive actions, which will reduce services in rural areas.
- Performance and Testing.** Operational testing of increment 3 capabilities was conducted to demonstrate the remaining unmet KPP. Based on this testing, DOT&E determined that increment 3 was operationally effective and suitable but not cyber resilient. DHS will use these results to inform the program's ADE 3 decision, which was planned for September 2025 but has been delayed.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



NEXT GENERATION NETWORK PRIORITY SERVICES PHASE 1

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

DHS established NGN-PS in response to an executive order requiring that the federal government be able to communicate at all times. The program's acquisition strategy aims to achieve cost-effective priority services by using commercially-owned public communications infrastructure. Once operational, CISA transfers NGN-PS acquired capabilities to its Priority Telecommunications Service program for sustainment. NGN-PS and Priority Telecommunications Service are intended to work together to prevent operational gaps in emergency communications. CISA established initial baselines for NGN-PS Phase 1 increment 1 in January 2011 and increment 2 in November 2013. DHS leadership approved a revised baseline for Phase 1 in April 2018, which established cost and schedule goals for increment 3. The program achieved FOC for increments 1 and 2 in October 2018 and December 2022, respectively, and is working to achieve FOC for increment 3. This will occur once all service providers deploy increment 3 capabilities over their core networks and successfully complete operational testing.

Cost and Schedule Status

CISA officials said increment 3 was on track to achieve ADE 3 by September 2025 and FOC by December 2025 as planned. However, as of January 2026, ADE 3 had yet to occur because, according to officials, scheduling was initially delayed due to the lapse in appropriations and further delayed due to the dissolution of PARM. Despite these delays, they reported that the program declared FOC for increment 3 in October 2025—2 months early. As of January 2026, CISA was reviewing the program's FOC declaration memo and the program was working with CISA and DHS to complete ADE 3.

Officials explained that the program was able to complete all activities needed to achieve these milestones despite terminating several contracts in response to recent executive actions. Most notably, the program did not extend its contract for integration services that it awarded in September 2024. According to CISA officials, this contract included managing the ongoing development and deployment of increment 3 capabilities by the three major service providers, several local service providers, and a cable company. The lapse of this contract resulted in a loss of services with 16 regional carriers. Officials explained that this means priority communication services will no longer be available in rural areas, including Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska. However, they are working to establish a new integration services contract.

The current cost estimate of \$868 million covers all three increments and is within the current baseline goals. CISA officials stated that the NGN-PS program did not receive any OBBBA funding.

Performance and Testing

Phase 1 has met all 6 of its KPPs. The program previously met five KPPs during testing for increments 1 and 2. Operational testing of the sixth KPP—wired call quality—was conducted in preparation for completing increment 3.

The Priority Telecommunications Service program evaluates the testing conducted by service providers on

their own networks. According to the NGN-PS program manager, this assures consistent Priority Telecommunications Service operations as NGN-PS capabilities are incorporated. The NGN-PS program focuses on developmental test and evaluation activities, such as witnessing and reviewing tests to verify performance, functionality, and operational readiness.

DOT&E assessed the operational test results for increment 3 and determined that it was operationally effective and suitable but not cyber resilient. This is because capabilities for NGN-PS are an extension of service provider networks, which are susceptible to cybersecurity attacks. CISA officials reported that service providers have proprietary and confidential cybersecurity efforts ongoing, and that it is difficult to obtain sufficient information on how these providers implement cybersecurity processes. To mitigate this challenge, CISA officials said they added requirements in the contracts with the three major service providers. These requirements include conducting a cyber tabletop exercise and attesting that specific protocols are used to secure the networks.

Program Management

According to officials, CISA terminated or did not extend a total of eight contracts supporting NGN-PS in response to recent executive actions and 5 of 13 federal staff have resigned or departed through workforce reduction programs. Officials do not anticipate these reductions to negatively affect Phase 1 because it is almost complete, but they could affect future program phases.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.

Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 2

NGN-PS is a multi-phased program that aims to enhance emergency telecommunications services to ensure public safety personnel can communicate during emergency response and recovery operations. Phase 1 is developing and deploying priority voice access. Phase 2 builds on Phase 1 by developing and deploying priority data, video, and information services capabilities. It also consists of proofs of concept to explore service options, alternate technologies, and cybersecurity implications for data and video capabilities. CISA has not yet established increments for Phase 2.



Source: DHS. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of 7 KPPs has not begun.

Servicing agency: Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization (DITCO)

Contracting approach: The contracts awarded to major telecommunication service providers under the program's interagency agreement with DITCO support both Phases 1 and 2.

Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: ADE 2B by December 2026

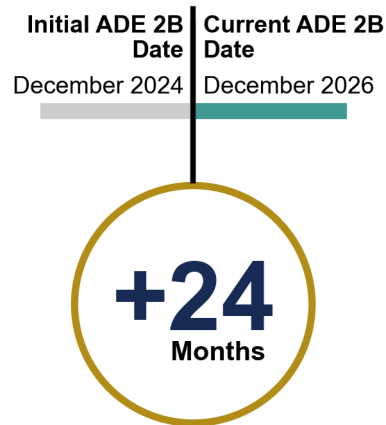
Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** CISA officials are in the process of rescoping Phase 2 to first focus on 5G signaling and 5G voice capabilities based on lower-than-planned funding levels. This effort involves revising the program's cost estimate to inform setting cost and schedule goals in an initial baseline at ADE 2B, which has already been delayed 2 years.
- Performance and Testing.** CISA officials may also revise the KPPs as the program develops its initial baseline. Once capabilities are developed, the government will oversee testing conducted by service providers on their own networks.
- Program Management.** According to CISA officials, staffing shortfalls due to federal workforce reduction efforts have made the program's effort to rescope Phase 2 more challenging.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



NEXT GENERATION NETWORK PRIORITY SERVICES PHASE 2

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

DHS established NGN-PS in response to an executive order requiring that the federal government be able to communicate at all times. The program's acquisition strategy aims to achieve cost effective priority services by using commercially-owned public communications infrastructure. Once operational, CISA will transfer capabilities acquired under NGN-PS Phase 2 to its Priority Telecommunications Service program for sustainment. NGN-PS and Priority Telecommunications Service are intended to work together to prevent operational gaps in emergency communications.

Cost and Schedule Status

NGN-PS Phase 2 continues to face significant funding shortfalls, which CISA officials stated may further delay reaching ADE 2B. As we reported in prior assessments, the program already delayed this milestone from December 2024 to December 2026 because it received less funding than it needed in fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

CISA officials indicated that the NGN-PS program did not receive any OBBBA funding. Additionally, the amount of annual funding they expect to receive for Phase 2 over the next 5 years decreased by 28 percent—from \$25 million to \$18 million per year. Officials are working on a plan to rescope Phase 2 based on this planned lower funding level, which will result in a new cost estimate. This plan will first focus on developing and deploying 5G signaling and 5G voice capabilities with three major service providers by 2030. Officials explained that 5G signaling is foundational to all future priority data development. The program will defer all other Phase 2 capabilities until additional funding becomes available.

5G voice capabilities were not originally part of Phase 2. However, the NGN-PS program chose to add these capabilities to align with each service provider's existing development schedule for priority features. This decision also aligned with user needs. CISA officials stated that a survey of users conducted by the program's independent test agent identified 5G voice as one of the highest priority needs. The program's efforts to rescope Phase 2 based on a change to its business case and input from customers is consistent with our leading practices for product development (GAO-22-104513).

Performance and Testing

Phase 2 has seven KPPs that focus on data communications and audio/video quality to meet mission and user needs, among other things. However, CISA officials stated that they may revise the KPPs as the program develops its initial baseline. They anticipate this effort will also include dividing Phase 2 capabilities into increments, like Phase 1.

Capabilities will be evaluated through developmental and operational testing conducted by service providers on their own networks. The government will provide oversight to verify performance, functionality, and operational readiness.

Additionally, CISA had been pursuing proofs of concept to inform aspects of Phase 2 and to lay the groundwork for future NGN-PS phases. These proofs of concept focused on (1) interoperability; (2) cybersecurity; (3) alternative network technology; (4) Wi-Fi; and (5) other concepts for data, video, and information services. CISA officials told us that they stopped all proofs of concept work as of September 2024 due to the program's funding constraints.

Program Management

According to officials, CISA terminated or did not extend a total of eight contracts supporting NGN-PS in response to recent executive actions and 5 of 13 federal staff have resigned or departed through workforce reduction programs. Officials stated that they managed program activities for Phases 1 and 2 in the short term by matrixing staff from within CISA's Emergency Communications Division, which oversees both NGN-PS and the Priority Telecommunications Services program. However, officials noted that this strategy is unsustainable in the long term. Additionally, they lost in-house engineering and cybersecurity expertise, which has made replanning Phase 2 more challenging.

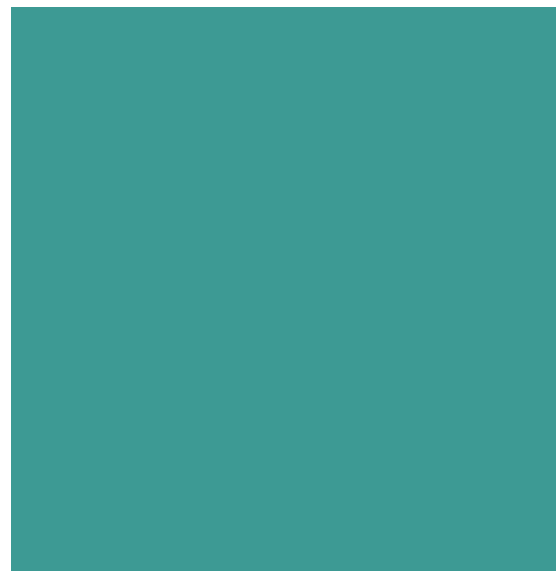
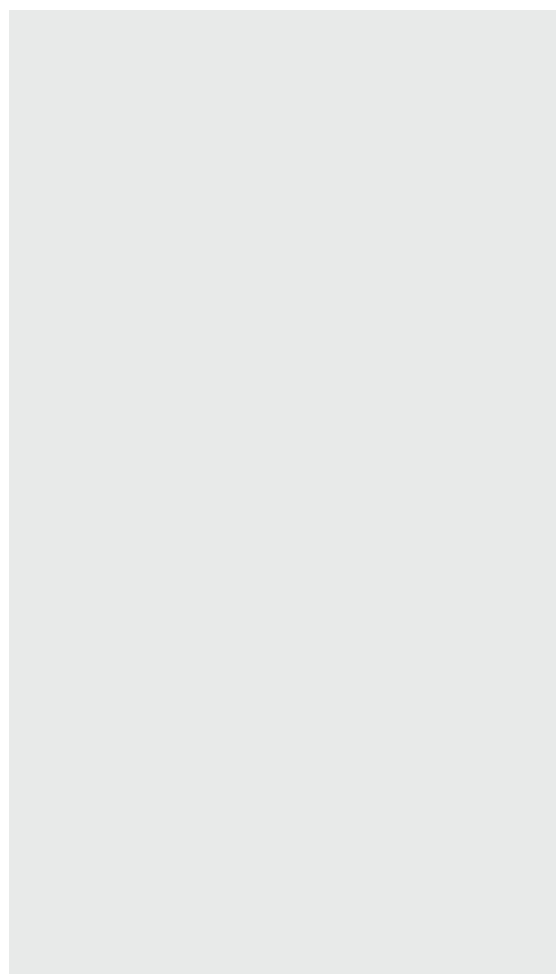
Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Federal Emergency

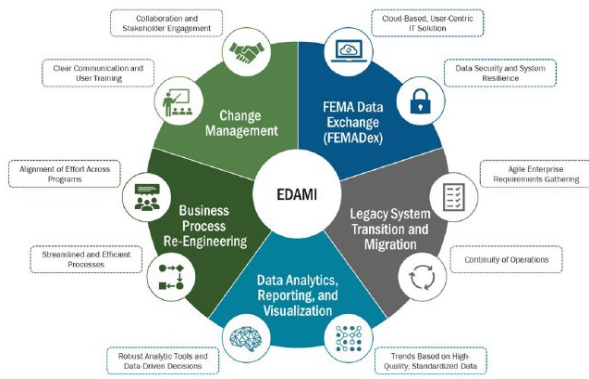
Management Agency



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Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative

EDAMI aims to enhance FEMA’s capacity to make data-driven decisions to inform disaster preparedness, response, and recovery operations; provide support to field staff, leaders, and partners; and improve outcomes for communities and survivors. The program aims to provide enterprise analytics capabilities and offer business intelligence support through the cloud-based FEMA Data Exchange (FEMADex) platform. FEMADex will integrate over 70 existing data systems and replace the legacy Enterprise Data Warehouse system.



Source: FEMA. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters: Testing of 5 KPPs had not been completed as of September 2025.

Number of prime contractors: 11

Contracting approach: The program reported awarding 22 contracts in fiscal year 2025, including a firm-fixed-price task order for agile development and testing support.

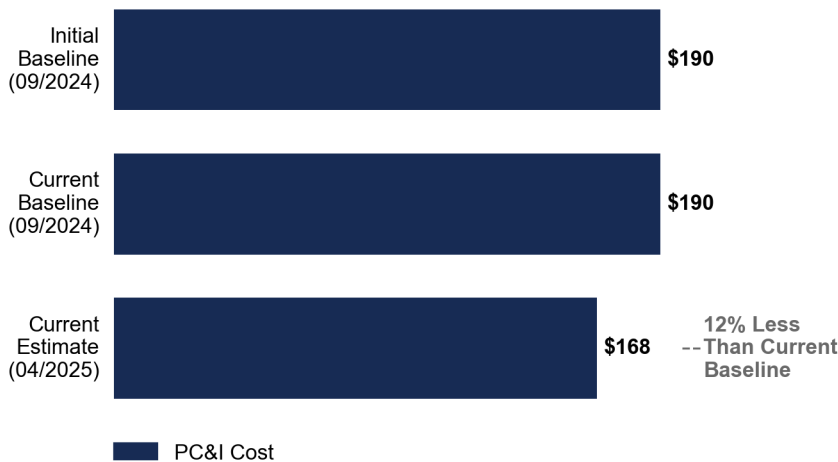
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: IOC by September 2026

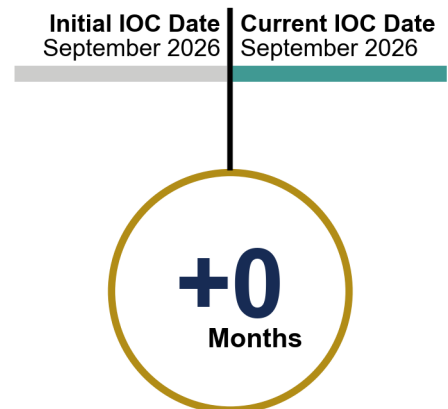
Key Findings

- **Cost and Schedule.** EDAMI remains within current cost and schedule goals. Program officials are currently on track to achieve IOC in March 2026, 6 months earlier than the September 2026 goal. However, post-IOC milestones are at risk due to staffing decreases and lengthy processing times for contract actions.
- **Program Management.** The program’s staffing levels have decreased by half since January 2025.
- **Performance and Testing.** EDAMI’s independent test agent was drafting an operational assessment plan for EDAMI’s five KPPs, planning to demonstrate them in support of IOC. FEMADex is operational with an early adopter program having over 1,000 users in the system.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



ENTERPRISE DATA AND ANALYTICS MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

FEMA established the EDAMI program in 2017 to improve data-driven decision-making capabilities and share insights with emergency management partners throughout the disaster life cycle. The program uses an agile development approach to plan, design, and test capabilities. The program employs an agile IT acquisition strategy to design, develop, and deliver customized software programs for full-scale FEMADex system deployment. In July 2022, the program achieved ADE 2A after developing a program LCCE and conducting a proof of concept phase, among other activities. In November 2024, DHS approved the ADE 2B for the program and established its initial APB after the FEMA Office of the Chief Information Officer endorsed the FEMADex solution architecture.

Cost and Schedule Status

EDAMI continues to meet current cost and schedule goals. Program officials said that EDAMI received acquisition funds as part of the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution, which allowed them to continue development and to work towards IOC. Program officials said they plan to achieve IOC in March 2026, 6 months ahead of their APB threshold of September 2026. Despite being ahead of schedule, the program is at risk of not meeting its ADE 3 or FOC milestones in part because of significant reductions in program staff and contract support since January 2025 and delays in processing contract actions at DHS. The program also noted that it did not receive OBBBA funding.

Specifically, the program noted an approximate 50 percent reduction in full-time equivalent positions between January 2025 and June 2025, dropping from 35 positions to 17 positions, respectively. The program attributes that attrition to (1) the February 2025 Executive Order 14210 that called for a reduction in workforce resulting in the termination of probationary employees, (2) the January 2025 presidential memorandum “Return to In-Person Work” that resulted in voluntary departures of remote employees, and (3) the January 2025 “Fork in the Road” initiative that offered voluntary deferred resignations.

In addition, the program reported having trouble obtaining approval of contract actions for program management office support, FEMADex training delivery and development, change management and user support, software server administration, and independent verification and validation services. The Secretary of Homeland Security issued a memorandum in June 2025 that requires secretarial approval of contract obligations over \$100,000. As of September 2025, program officials said that three of nine contract actions requested since June had been approved. These planned fiscal year 2025 activities will likely need to be moved to fiscal year 2026 and absorbed by program staff, which could lead to further backlog.

Performance and Testing

In December 2023, the EDAMI program completed its pilot phase and delivered a minimum viable product. The minimum viable product supported FEMADex’s fundamental mission by addressing its five mission needs: (1) ingesting, (2) integrating, (3) analyzing, (4) sharing, and (5) protecting data. To reach this milestone, EDAMI officials developed and implemented an early adopter program that included groups across the agency to serve as primary users and testers of FEMADex. In April 2024, the program received a 3-year authority to operate FEMADex after pilot phase completion.

As of September 2025, EDAMI’s independent test agent was drafting an operational assessment plan. Officials said they are aiming to formally evaluate all five KPPs during an operational assessment in support of IOC. FEMADex is operational with an early adopter program with over 1,000 users. According to officials, user feedback has allowed the program to iterate on capabilities. For example, the program took user feedback about the original search capability not being as useful as planned to select a more robust open-source solution that better met user needs. We previously found that leading companies collect user feedback to inform improvements to the final product, a practice that DHS policy requires.

Program Management

The program’s staffing levels have decreased by half since our last review. According to program officials, this includes expertise in software development and data engineering, product management, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence knowledge.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Integrated Public Alert & Warning System

IPAWS is a national system for alerting and warning localities in situations of war, natural disaster, or other hazards. Discrete Segment 1 is delivered and operational. IPAWS is currently focused on two efforts that make up Discrete Segment 2 and which upon completion will allow the program to achieve FOC: (1) National Public Warning System (NPWS) radio station modernization, which provides the president access to all television and radio stations for national emergency warnings; and (2) IPAWS-Open Platform for Emergency Networks (IPAWS-OPEN), which migrates the system that routes alert messages to wireless, radio, television, and internet alert systems to an optimized cloud service. Our assessment focuses on these two efforts.

Source: FEMA. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Acquisition Type: Mixed (IT/Non-IT)

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: 3 out of 3 met.

Number of prime contractors: 6

Contracting approach: The program reported using a variety of contract vehicles, including DHS and General Services Administration contracts, for testing activities and to purchase satellite bandwidth.

Life-cycle path: System/Product Development (NPWS)/Incremental Software Development (IPAWS-OPEN)

Next major milestone: Program ADE 3 is to be determined

Key Findings

- **Schedule.** As of September 2025, the IPAWS program submitted an updated APB to DHS for approval. The new APB would separate IPAWS-OPEN migration and NPWS station modernization into distinct ADE 3 and FOC events. The program previously delayed FOC by 27 months to December 2026. If approved, the program will further delay FOC by approximately 3 years, to September 2029.
- **Testing.** The program met all 3 of its KPPs based on completed operational testing in 2024. However, internal to the program it is still working to increase high-altitude electromagnetic pulse protection at NPWS stations.
- **Program Management.** As of September 2025, seven of 28 program positions were unfilled, six of which the program considers critical, including the NPWS program manager position.

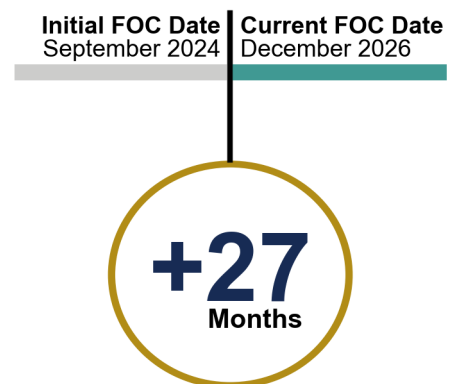
BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



■ PC&I Cost

Note: Costs shown are for Discrete Segment 2 only. The program is in the process of updating its current baseline which should align it with the current estimate

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: The schedule baseline is undergoing updates and program officials anticipate changing the current FOC date.

INTEGRATED PUBLIC ALERT & WARNING SYSTEM

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

IPAWS Discrete Segment 2 established its initial baseline in 2017. Since then, the program revised the baseline for Discrete Segment 2 four times and delayed key events each time. For example, in 2022, IPAWS delayed FOC by over 2 years to December 2026. This was due to COVID-19-related construction delays, among other things. The program will reach FOC for Discrete Segment 2 when it completes both NPWS modernization and IPAWS-OPEN migration, and demonstrates that both meet performance goals. In 2020, we made two recommendations to FEMA regarding obtaining feedback from IPAWS users and prioritizing IPAWS applications, which FEMA has since implemented (see [GAO-20-294](#)).

Cost and Schedule Status

As of September 2025, program officials told us they submitted an updated APB to DHS for approval. The new APB separates IPAWS-OPEN migration and NPWS station modernization into distinct ADE 3 and FOC events, as the IPAWS-OPEN migration already completed all activities necessary for FOC. DHS will approve ADE 3 once the program establishes the new baseline. According to officials, the new APB will reflect a delay in the Discrete Segment 2 FOC of nearly 3 years until September 2029.

Officials said the program experienced cost challenges related to building and modernizing NPWS stations. These include rising labor and material costs, supply chain interruptions, and permitting and zoning delays, among others. To mitigate rising costs, program officials said that they negotiate contracts and purchase equipment in advance. However, officials noted that this can result in increased storage and transportation costs for the program.

According to officials, the program's approved budget was \$24 million short of the estimated need in fiscal year 2025. As a result, officials said that they have had to meet program requirements with less funding. For example, the program did not continue contracting for studies on consumer preferences for emergency alerts. Officials said that the program is leveraging similar studies conducted for other government partners to fill the information gap. The program reported that it did not receive OBBBA funding.

The program also reported challenges related to the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolutions and recent executive orders. For example, due to funding delays under the continuing resolutions, the program experienced gaps in vendor service and delays to contract awards for mission critical operational support including the purchase of NPWS station equipment. Similarly, recent executive orders have resulted in delayed approvals to conduct NPWS station inspections, according to the program.

Performance and Testing

As part of the program's efforts to reduce costs, program officials told us they replaced an operations and testing contract by leveraging internal IPAWS and FEMA expertise to fill the gap left by that contract.

We previously reported that IPAWS met all 3 of its KPPs based on completed operational test activities in 2024. However, program officials clarified that internal to the program it is still working to achieve high-altitude electromagnetic pulse protection at NPWS stations directly covering 90 percent of the US population. The program expects to fully meet this goal by fiscal year 2029.

Program Management

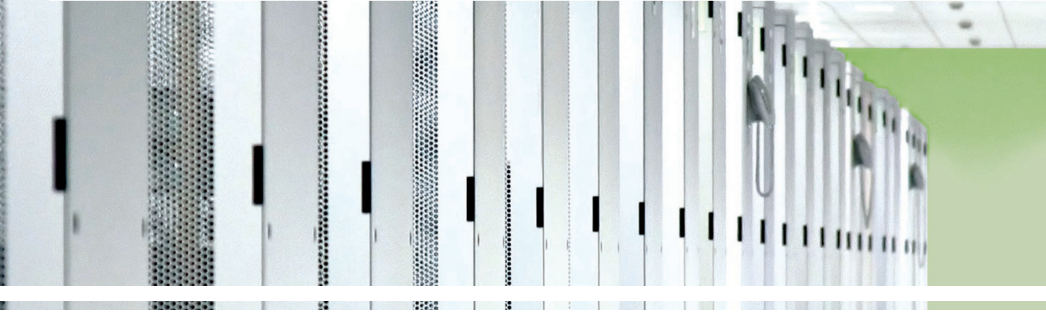
The program is experiencing staffing challenges. As of September 2025, seven of 28 positions were vacant. Of those vacancies, program officials consider six to be critical, including the NPWS program manager position. Staffing shortfalls have contributed to contracting challenges. Program officials noted that they extended some contracts to give the program more time to respond to new guidance requiring Secretary level approval of all contract obligations valued at \$100,000 or more. In addition, officials told us that due to a hiring freeze, they leveraged lateral transfers of personnel within FEMA to fill open positions and have sought approval to hire for the NPWS program manager position.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The program added that it provides resilient systems for authorities to communicate with the public before, during and after emergencies and is dedicated to assisting authorities to ensure the continuity of emergency communications to the public. The program stated it continues to assess and mitigate factors that affect NPWS schedule and cost. The program is also exploring a redundant alerting pathway to expand messaging, and Advanced Visual Alerting capabilities.

HART

HOMELAND
ADVANCED
RECOGNITION
TECHNOLOGY™



Management Directorate



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HART will replace DHS's legacy Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) that compares, stores, and shares biometric information on U.S. citizens and foreign nationals with partners to support travel, trade, and immigration. HART will increase biometric and identity management capabilities to support visa programs, law enforcement, intelligence analyses, and other functions. HART is also expected to compare, store, and share biometric information, including fingerprints, face, and irises. The program is currently focused on increment 1—the core operating infrastructure. Future capabilities will be addressed after increment 1 is fielded and IDENT is decommissioned.



Source: Office of Biometric Identity Management. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Management Directorate (MGMT)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 0 of 4 increment 1 KPPs have been met.

Prime contractor: N/A

Contracting approach: The government took over as the system integrator in October 2022, integrating activities including systems engineering and data center and cloud services provided by five contractors.

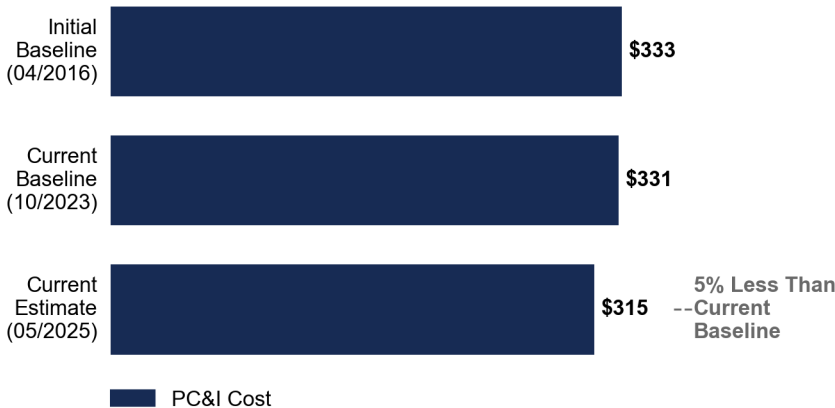
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: Increment 1 ADE 2C/Program IOC by September 2026

Key Findings

- **Cost and Schedule.** Following a series of schedule breaches, HART currently plans to deliver a core subset of originally planned capabilities at program IOC, 7 years later than initially planned. The program has a current expected acquisition cost of \$315 million, which is 10 percent less than the prior estimate.
- **Performance and Testing.** Program officials expect to begin testing to validate key performance parameters in early fiscal year 2026 and complete the operational assessment by June 2026.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Current baseline includes increment 1 costs and previously expended increment 2 costs.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



HOMELAND ADVANCED RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The HART program faced numerous challenges after DHS approved its initial acquisition program baseline in April 2016. At that time, the program planned to deliver all capabilities through four increments for a total cost of \$4.7 billion and reach program IOC in December 2018. The program's most current acquisition program baseline from October 2023 reflects increment 1 capabilities only, with \$331 million currently planned for acquisition costs and an overall planned program cost of \$2.9 billion, including sustainment. Program IOC—which marks the delivery of HART increment 1 and the decommissioning of the legacy IDENT system—is now planned for no later than September 2026, over 7 years later than initially planned.

Since April 2016, the program has rebaselined three times due to ongoing challenges. The HART program declared schedule breaches in June 2017, January 2020, and July 2023. The program also declared a cost breach in May 2020. Program officials attributed these breaches to a variety of challenges, including contract delays; financial constraints; technical obstacles; rework resulting from an overly complex, high-risk design; and disagreements between the contractor and program officials on interpretations of program requirements.

Cost and Schedule Status

Since last year's assessment, which focused on HART's October 2023 rebaselining to exit breach status, the program has generally progressed within the scope of its new baseline. The 2025 total life-cycle cost estimate for HART places the program's expected acquisition cost at \$315 million, consistent with the current baseline and 10 percent less than the prior estimate. Similarly, while HART had been targeting program IOC for June 2026, 3 months earlier than the current baseline date of September 2026, officials said the impact of the FY26 lapse in appropriations has moved that date back to the September 2026 baseline. The program reported that it did not receive OBBBA funding.

In September 2023 we found that program cost and schedule estimates did not fully follow GAO-identified leading practices and made two related recommendations. DHS concurred with those recommendations and is working to implement them by applying cost and schedule management leading practices (see GAO-23-105959). These recommendations remain open and are being reviewed for progress.

The 7 years of delay in delivering HART capabilities present a significant challenge to meeting the needs of DHS and its partner agencies that rely on IDENT to perform their missions. Continued reliance on IDENT poses ongoing risk and additional investments are necessary to keep the legacy system operational.

Performance and Testing

HART completed large-scale developmental testing during 2023, demonstrating two of four increment 1 KPPs. However, testing officials later noted that they have not yet independently substantiated those demonstrations. Program officials told us that testing to validate developmental testing results and demonstrate achievement of the remaining increment 1 KPPs will

begin in early fiscal year 2026. They also stated that because of the shift from sequential to continuous testing, the operational assessment of HART's readiness for program IOC is now planned to conclude in the third quarter of fiscal year 2026.

Program Management

In September 2024, in response to recommendations by a 2023 Management Directorate working group, DHS formally shifted oversight of HART from the Office of Biometric Identity Management to the Office of the Chief Information Officer. This shift is intended to help ensure access to subject matter expertise to successfully guide technical execution and support the government's role as the systems integrator.

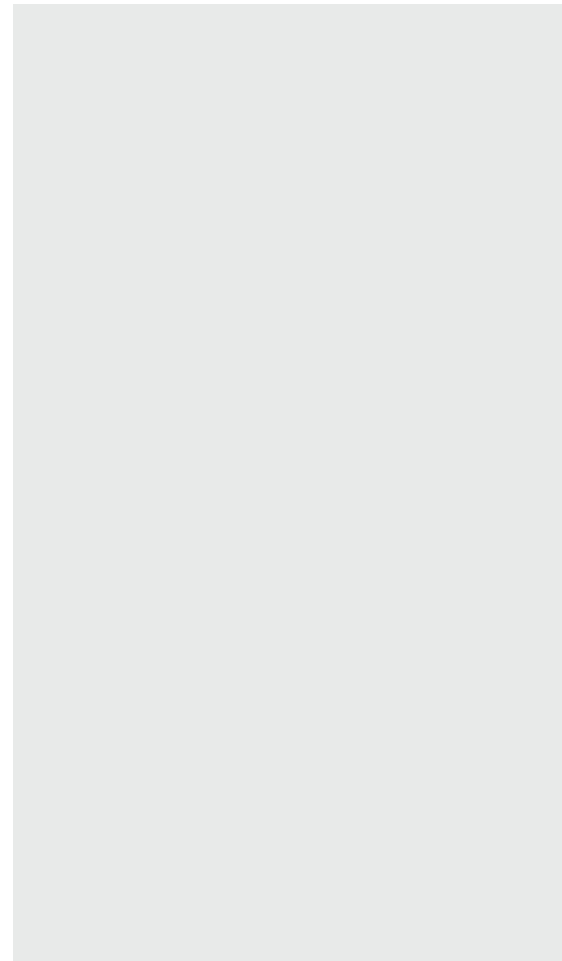
Program officials reported significant program risks associated with staffing shortfalls. In particular, the program noted that its data architect position and four other positions are vacant and have not been successfully filled due to government hiring freezes. Officials told us they are working to mitigate these gaps with detailees and other support from elsewhere in DHS.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Transportation Security Administration



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Checkpoint Property Screening System

CPSS is intended to replace aging, two-dimensional Advanced Technology (AT) X-ray machines that TSA uses as the primary screening system for passenger carry-on items at airport checkpoints. TSA plans to procure, in two increments, a total of 2,263 systems with enhanced capabilities, including computed tomography (CT), to improve detection of explosives, weapons, and other prohibited items. TSA is procuring increment 1 systems in four configurations: (1) AT/CT, (2) base, (3) mid-size, and (4) full-size. This approach will provide flexibility at airport checkpoint facilities with varying sizes and passenger volumes. The program is also focused on implementing upgrades to fielded systems. This assessment primarily covers increment 1.

Source: TSA. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 3 of 4 KPPs met.

Prime contractors: Analogic Corporation; Smiths Detection; SureScan (IDSS); Daifuku Airport America Corporation

Contracting approach: The program reported using various contracts for modified commercial solutions with vendor custom-developed software, including firm-fixed-price orders.

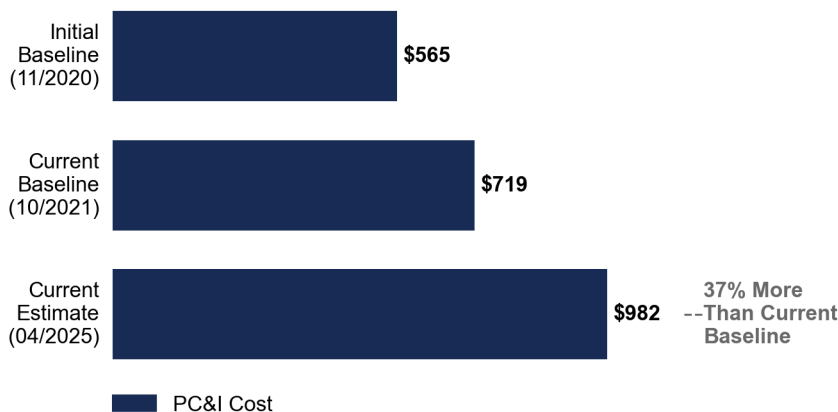
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: FOC (extended increment 1) by September 2029

Key Findings

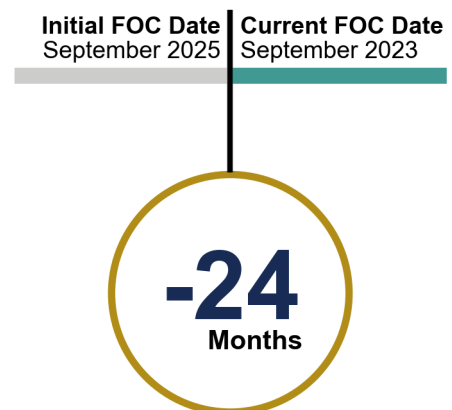
- Cost and Schedule.** Costs have risen since the program established its initial baseline, in 2020, mainly due to increased quantities. The program reached the original increment 1 FOC in September 2023 and anticipates extending increment 1 to procure 1,384 units through fiscal year 2029. CPSS officials considered purchasing new systems, but the process would have been expensive and time consuming, especially since new capabilities require only software upgrades.
- Program Management.** During increment 1 the program is generally using a “hub and spoke” model—procuring units for a larger airport, or hub, and smaller surrounding airports, or spokes—while also prioritizing airport needs. The program is also planning for new systems in increment 2. Officials told us the program, vendors, and TSA will be developing standards and physical infrastructure for the new systems in increment 2.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: The program is in the process of updating its current baseline which should align it with the current estimate.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



CHECKPOINT PROPERTY SCREENING SYSTEM

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

TSA continues to make progress deploying and procuring CPSS increment 1 systems. According to program officials, there are 11 systems that qualified at the end of the increment 1 qualification phase in December 2023. These systems include: Analogic's base, mid-size, and full-size configurations; Smiths Detection's base, mid-size, full-size, and AT/CT configurations; SureScan's (IDSS) mid-size and full-size configurations; and Daifuku's mid-size and full-size configurations. The program plans to procure additional capabilities from these vendors until the start of increment 2, according to program officials. Planning and executing of increment 1 upgrades is ongoing. According to program officials, the program is developing and implementing enhancement and capabilities that are prioritized into three upgrade paths: (1) enhance detection, (2) system optimization, and (3) networking/cybersecurity, such as remote screening. CPSS will develop these capabilities as the program moves toward the extended increment 1 FOC.

Cost and Schedule Status

The program is revising its APB to procure additional units and upgrade deployed systems under increment 1 through fiscal year 2029. CPSS reached the original increment 1 FOC, with the deployment of 771 units, 2 years ahead of schedule in September 2023 and, in 2022, received TSA approval to exceed the increment 1 FOC quantity. Program officials believe that purchasing additional units under increment 1 is the best use of time and money to continue delivering useful capabilities as CPSS waits for new systems under increment 2 to be available for purchase around fiscal year 2029. CPSS officials told us they considered pursuing a new generation of production units, but the process would be expensive and time consuming as new capabilities for existing CPSS systems require only software upgrades.

In fiscal years 2024 and 2025, according to program officials, CPSS's funding was approximately \$35.2 million, 50 percent less than fiscal year 2023, which was \$70.4 million. According to program officials, this reduced funding over the last 2 years could push FOC for the overall program (increments 1 and 2) out a year from fiscal year 2043 to fiscal year 2044. Program officials noted that the program could procure as many as 100 additional units, if CPSS receives additional funding in 2025 through the OBBBA. However, the program is not aware of any additional funding from the OBBBA.

According to program officials, as of September 2025, CPSS acquired 1,119 units—including approximately 151 donated systems—meaning the program had approximately 49 percent of the units it needs to reach program FOC. Of the 1,119 units, according to program officials, CPSS has installed 1,011, which represents roughly 45 percent of the units they need to reach program FOC.

Performance and Testing

The independent test agent completed test and evaluation on remote and cross lane luggage screening for increment 1 systems in August 2024. The Test and Evaluation Division found this capability to be

operationally effective, operationally suitable with limitations, but not operationally resilient. As a result, the program is meeting only three of its four KPPs for the two increment 1 systems. The Test and Evaluation Division provided a number of recommendations for TSA to address including conducting follow-on test and evaluation activities to support an updated assessment of operational cyber resilience. According to DHS officials, as of August 2025, TSA has the authority to implement the remote cross lane screening capability in CPSS units.

Program Management

Generally, the program continues to procure CPSS systems using a hub and spoke model, according to program officials. This approach could save operations and sustainment costs, but officials told us it is too early to know if the program can achieve its goal of saving resources. In addition, the program also has to be responsive to airports, which means procuring units based on need. Program officials added they are starting to change priorities in anticipation of events, such as, the World Cup in 2026 and the Olympics in 2028.

The program still plans to use an open systems architecture approach for increment 2, as we reported last year. An open system allows various consumers or different manufacturers to add, remove, modify, replace, or sustain system components, without having to rely solely on the original manufacturer. This could, according to program officials, streamline system requirements. Program officials noted that implementing an open systems architecture would take years as the program, TSA, and vendors develop standards and build the physical infrastructure.

Program Office Comments

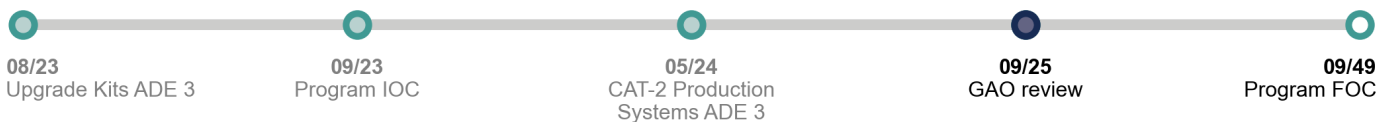
We provided a draft assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. In January 2026, program officials reported that they have discontinued the incremental development approach. They plan to include this change in the upcoming APB.

Credential Authentication Technology



The CAT system performs four actions that together authorize a passenger to enter the protected area of an airport: (1) authenticate passenger identity documents (ID), (2) confirm passenger flight reservations, (3) verify passenger prescreened security status, and (4) perform a facial comparison to verify a match with passenger ID. TSA is adding new capabilities by upgrading deployed CAT units and procuring new units. These upgrades include facial biometric verification to confirm that the presenter of the ID is the person represented on the ID, authentication of digital ID, and a self-service capability for individuals to present their own ID. The program is no longer using an incremental strategy and will continue procuring new CAT-2 units until FOC.

Source: IDEMIA. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: 4 of 4 KPPs met.

Prime contractor: IDEMIA

Contracting approach: In April 2023, the program awarded an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract to IDEMIA to produce new CAT-2 units.

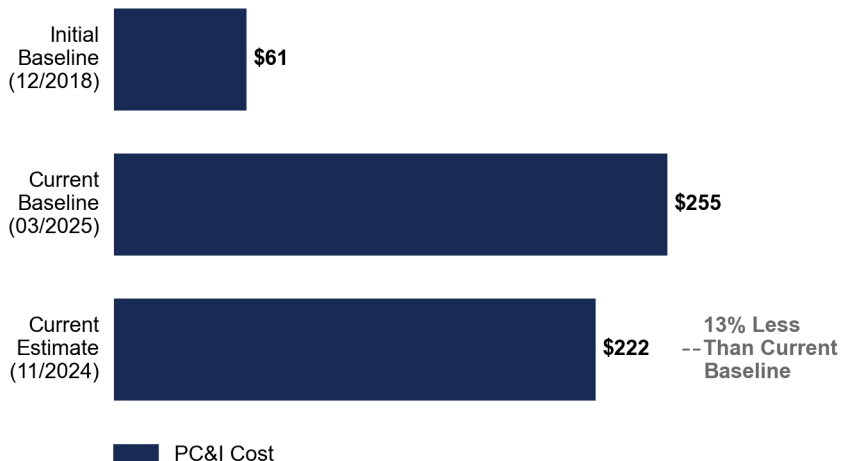
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

Next major milestone: FOC in September 2049

Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** Costs have more than doubled since the program established its initial baseline in 2018. However, the cost growth is mainly due to increased quantities and upgraded capabilities. As of February 2025, TSA had deployed 2,095 CAT-2 units as it works to achieve FOC.
- Program Management.** In March 2025, DHS approved a revised APB that directs the program to procure and deploy CAT-2 units up to the program's FOC. The program shifted to a regional deployment approach for CAT-2 units and continues to use a "hub and spoke" approach—deploying units to a larger airport, or hub, and then smaller airports, or spokes—when possible.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months

Note: next milestone to take place in 2049.

CREDENTIAL AUTHENTICATION TECHNOLOGY

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

While the CAT systems verify that a passenger's physical and digital ID is authentic, the upgrade kits and CAT-2 systems biometrically compare a passenger's facial image against the image on their ID. In doing so, the CAT-2 systems automate the verification process, which closes a capability gap in identity verification and improves TSA's ability to mitigate the threat of imposters. In addition, CAT-2 systems have an optional self-service configuration that allow passengers to insert IDs themselves. In June 2022, the CAT program rebaselined to add new capabilities, including facial recognition verification. The rebaseline also increased the quantity of deployed upgrade kits and CAT-2 production systems using an incremental acquisition strategy. Program officials told us that as of February 2025, CAT-1 systems are no longer operational in the field.

Cost and Schedule Status

From 2018 to 2025, costs increased from the initial baseline largely due to increases in capabilities and quantities. The program's baseline cost goal has increased from \$61 million to \$255 million. However, the new goal reflects a total program quantity of 3,585 CAT-2 systems rather than the increment 1 total of 1,377.

The CAT program originally planned to procure 133 CAT-2 units in fiscal year 2025, but reduced the procurement quantity to 95 units due to funding constraints. According to program officials, however, the program can get close to its original procurement goal for fiscal year 2025. As of September 2025, CAT received 37 donated systems to fill the gap. TSA officials explained that through the TSA Capability Acceptance Process Donation Program, the program can receive donations of CAT-2 systems from airports or industry stakeholders. Program officials also shared that CAT did not receive any OBBBA funding.

As of February 2025, TSA had deployed a total of 2,095 CAT-2 units, meaning the program was just over halfway toward meeting the number of units required for FOC.

Performance and Testing

The program met its May 2025 goal for completing the REAL ID upgrade for deployed CAT upgrade kits and CAT-2 production systems, according to program officials.

An independent test agent completed follow-on test and evaluation on the REAL ID upgrade for the CAT-2 systems in December 2024. An independent test agent found the CAT-2 systems met requirements, but had some operational suitability and resiliency limitations.

Program Management

As we previously reported, CAT planned to have four increments. However, as the program upgraded base units ahead of schedule, DHS determined that this incremental acquisition strategy was no longer relevant. In March 2025, DHS approved a revised APB that removed the incremental acquisition strategy and directed

the program to procure and deploy 3,585 CAT-2 systems up to the FOC.

According to program officials, the CAT program used a hub and spoke approach to quickly deploy upgrade kits. This approach contributed to the program being 9 months ahead of its planned deployment schedule.

For distributing CAT-2 production systems, the program still uses a hub and spoke strategy when possible, but shifted to a regional strategy, according to program officials. This approach—a hub and spoke in reverse—assigns one deployment team to each of TSA's six regions to distribute CAT-2 production systems by first prioritizing smaller airports with the infrastructure for those systems. Then, using this approach, the program will evaluate larger airports in the six regions that have not fully deployed CAT-2 systems to determine whether those airports have enough CAT units to cover checkpoint lanes. The program also gathers information from end users, training personnel, and airport operations staff to ensure no conflicts with CAT-2 systems installation, according to officials.

CAT officials shared that by September 2025, approximately 101 CAT-2 units did not have maintenance service support because DHS had not approved contract award. As of January 2026, program officials reported that DHS and TSA had resolved this situation.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



U.S. Coast Guard



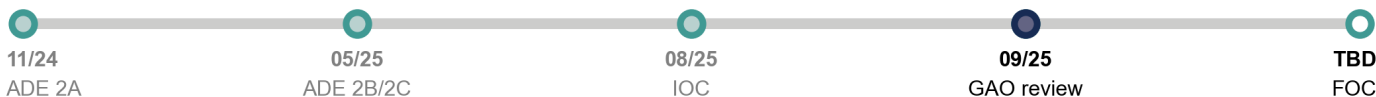
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Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker

The CAPI program is meant to address the Coast Guard's near-term Arctic icebreaking capability gap by purchasing and retrofitting an existing commercial vessel. The Coast Guard plans for the CAPI to support multiple missions including icebreaking operations; search and rescue; ports, waterways and coastal security; living marine resources; other law enforcement; and defense readiness. With the addition of the CAPI, which was commissioned by the Coast Guard and renamed *Storis*, the Coast Guard's operational polar fleet consists of two medium polar icebreakers and one heavy polar icebreaker.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: None

Prime contractors: Offshore Service Vessels, LLC (procurement); Alpha Marine Services (ship management and training)

Contracting approach: The Coast Guard awarded a firm-fixed price contract for the CAPI's purchase and initial vessel modifications to achieve IOC. The Coast Guard may also award contracts for further vessel modifications to achieve FOC.

Life-cycle path: The program reported it does not use any of the SELC tailoring paths.

Next major milestone: FOC is to be determined

Key Findings

- Schedule.** The Coast Guard accepted delivery of the CAPI in December 2024. After making minor modifications to the vessel, in August 2025, the Coast Guard commissioned the CAPI and achieved IOC. Congress granted exceptions in law from certain key acquisition tasks for the CAPI program. As a result, the Coast Guard has yet to develop schedule goals, operational requirements, or a life-cycle cost estimate. Program officials stated that FOC will be achieved between fiscal years 2030 and 2032 after completing vessel modifications needed to meet requirements.
- Cost.** The Coast Guard has yet to develop a cost baseline. The CAPI program is assessing costs to modify, operate, and sustain the CAPI, including costs to complete its homeport in Juneau, Alaska.

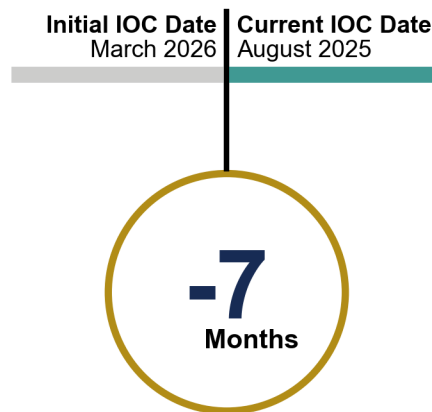
BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions

Initial Baseline (TBD)	Not yet approved
Current Baseline (TBD)	Not yet approved
Current Estimate (TBD)	Not yet approved

■ PC&I Cost

Note: Program has not yet completed a cost estimate or baseline.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE POLAR ICEBREAKER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

In September 2021, the National Security Council tasked the Coast Guard and DHS with developing a strategy to acquire a CAPI. DHS subsequently requested and received \$125 million in fiscal year 2024 to make the purchase. To expedite the acquisition, in the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Congress also granted exceptions and delayed due dates for certain key acquisition tasks. In March 2024, the Coast Guard announced its intent to award the contract non-competitively because it had identified that only one company met its needs. In November 2024, the Coast Guard awarded the CAPI contract to Offshore Service Vessels, LLC. The Coast Guard accepted delivery of the CAPI in December 2024. In July 2025, Congress appropriated \$300 million to the Coast Guard to support construction of the CAPI's homeport in Juneau, Alaska. We previously recommended that the Coast Guard develop a detailed cost estimate before purchasing the CAPI that incorporates the costs of vessel modifications to reach FOC to ensure that it is affordable. However, we closed this recommendation as no longer valid because the Coast Guard awarded the CAPI contract before developing such a cost estimate (GAO-25-106822).

Cost and Schedule Status

The Coast Guard commissioned the CAPI in August 2025 and renamed it *Storis*. The program also completed its first phase, achieving IOC, after previously completing several milestones including material condition, cybersecurity, and performance assessments, painting, and crewing of the vessel. The CAPI program achieved IOC approximately 8 months after accepting the vessel—7 months sooner than expected—after the CAPI's original owner agreed to amend the proposed contract to include additional work items and accelerate the contract award schedule. These items included vessel reactivation, reclassification, painting, and crew training.

After reaching IOC, the program began its second phase to achieve FOC. The program will develop a life-cycle cost estimate, cost and schedule goals, homeporting costs, and operational requirements that identify what modifications CAPI needs to achieve FOC, if any, among other things. These operational requirements include scientific research capacity, as required by the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. Program officials stated that they estimate they will complete developing operational requirements by September 2026, so the exact costs are unknown. We previously reported that it could cost over \$1 billion to purchase, maintain, operate, and build a homeport for the CAPI for the first 7 years (GAO-25-106822). Coast Guard officials noted that as of May 2026, the program has not yet developed a full life-cycle cost estimate.

In July 2025, program officials stated that the program had yet to request or receive funding for any follow-on procurement-related activities besides the CAPI purchase, which limited procurement activities. In August 2025, program officials stated that they did not receive any OBBBA funding for FOC modifications. Pending receipt of funding in fiscal year 2026, CAPI planning documents showed that it will undergo annual FOC modifications between its annual Arctic deployments starting in 2027 until the program achieves FOC between fiscal years 2030 and 2032.

Performance and Testing

In November 2024, the American Bureau of Shipping, a third party classification society, certified the CAPI as a polar class 4 vessel, which certifies the vessel for year-round operations in thick first-year ice. The Coast Guard deployed the CAPI to Alaskan waters in August and September 2025 with a hybrid crew composed of commercial and Coast Guard crew members. Officials told us that they plan to assess the CAPI's performance in ice in early 2026. The program conducted IOC cybersecurity assessments in February through May 2025, which officials stated identified three risk areas that they subsequently remedied. Officials also said that they plan to conduct further cybersecurity assessments and a capability assessment in fiscal year 2026, contingent on available resources.

Program Management

Coast Guard officials stated that the CAPI program office consists of two staff and that they will make further staffing decisions once the program develops its operational requirements and additional procurement funding is provided. The program awarded a ship management and training contract in May 2025 for a commercial crew to operate and maintain the CAPI. This contract includes training activities for some of the CAPI's Coast Guard crew.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. Program officials reported that the CAPI successfully completed its first Arctic patrol and its FOC requirements will be informed by additional operations and assessments.

Long Range Surveillance Aircraft



The Coast Guard uses HC-130J aircraft to conduct search and rescue missions, transport cargo and personnel, support law enforcement, and execute other operations. The aircraft are quad-engine, propeller-driven platforms with a range of approximately 5,500 nautical miles. Compared to the predecessor HC-130H, the HC-130J has advanced engines, propellers, and equipment that provide enhanced speed, altitude, range, and surveillance capabilities. The program originally planned to procure 22 aircraft by September 2027, but Coast Guard officials stated in June 2020 that the agency shifted the FOC to 2033 to prioritize funding for ship programs. We last reported on the LRS program's activities for fiscal year 2022 (GAO-23-106701).

Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

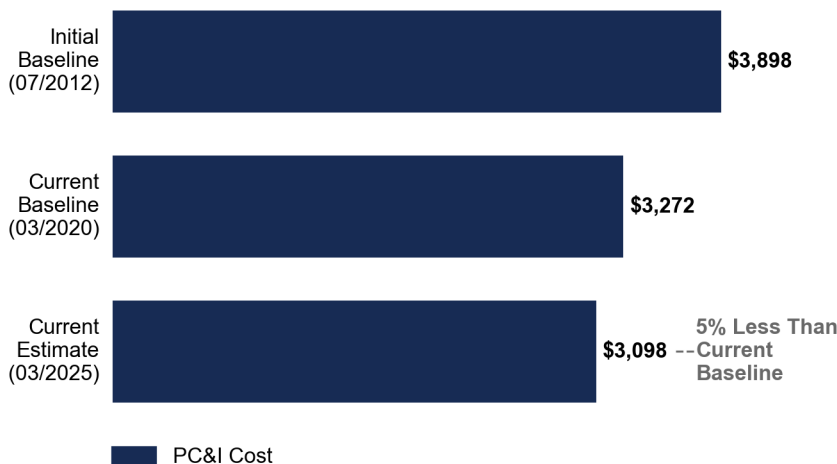
- Component:** U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- Acquisition Type:** Non-IT
- Acquisition Level:** 1
- Key Performance Parameters Status:** 7 of 7 met.
- Prime contractors:** L3Harris Integrated Mission Systems for sensor and system processor installation; Lockheed Martin for baseline aircraft
- Contracting approach:** Leverage U.S. Air Force fixed price incentive (firm target) contract for baseline aircraft; program contracts for sensor and system processor installation.
- Life-cycle path:** N/A
- Next major milestone:** FOC by September 2033

Current Status

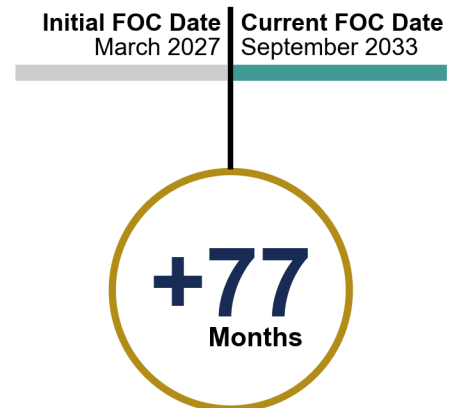
The program plans to use \$1.1 billion it reported receiving in the OBBBA to procure six aircraft, for 25 total HC-130Js funded, by September 2033. Officials said these six aircraft are one of many options under review to fill a capability gap created by the early retirement of HC-27Js in September 2028. They said the HC-130J does not need upgrades to perform HC-27J missions, but has higher operating costs.

Officials said aircraft 20 through 22 are scheduled for early delivery by September 2030 using the OBBBA funding. As of September 2025, Coast Guard reported it had delivered 17 aircraft, and two aircraft were in production. Officials said aircraft 17 cost \$97 million (in then-year dollars), while aircraft 19 is estimated to cost \$119 million. The \$22 million increase is due to inflation in the aviation industry.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and incorporated their technical comments as appropriate. Officials said the program plans to rebaseline and put aircraft 20 through 25 on contract in fiscal year 2026.

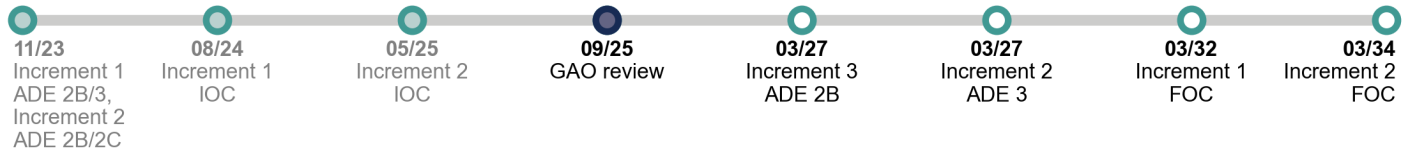
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Medium Range Recovery Helicopter

The MH-60T is a medium-range, multi-mission helicopter that the Coast Guard uses to fulfill missions such as search and rescue, and drug interdiction. The program is divided into three increments focused on extending the service life of the Coast Guard's MH-60T fleet through the 2040s; and increasing the number of aircraft in the fleet to replace the short-range MH-65 helicopters as they reach their service life limit. All increments have the option to use a mix of converting retired Navy H-60 aircraft and procuring new hulls from the original equipment manufacturer. This assessment covers all three increments.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



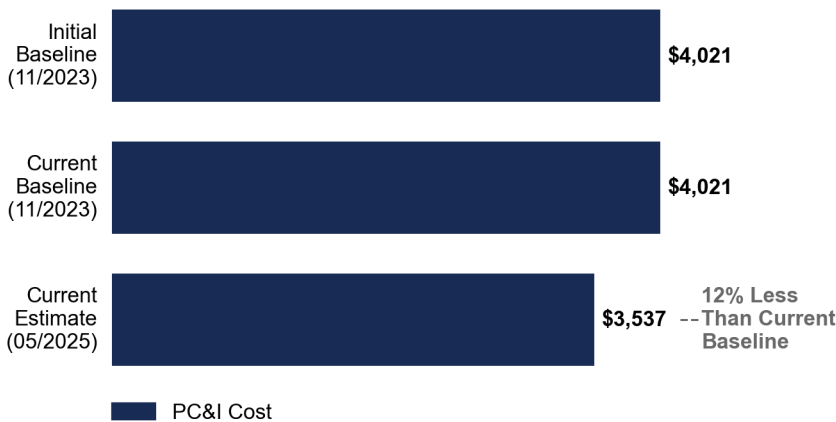
Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
Acquisition Type: Non-IT
Acquisition Level: 1
Key Performance Parameters Status: 6 out of 6 KPPs met.
Prime contractor: Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (new hulls)
Contracting approach: The program reported awarding a sole-source indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity, firm-fixed-price contract to Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation for new hulls in 2021.
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development
Next major milestone: Increment 3 ADE 2B by March 2027

Key Findings

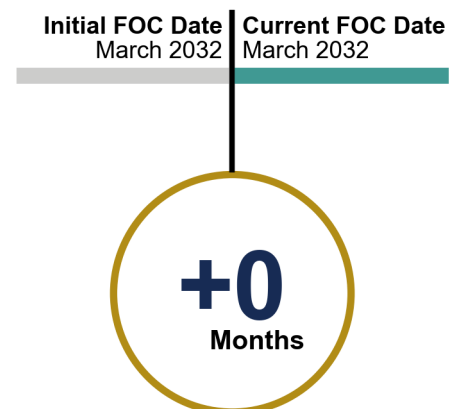
- Schedule.** In May 2025, the MH-60T program achieved initial operational capability for increment 2 by fielding that increment's first four aircraft. According to officials, due to increased funding from the OBBBA, the program currently plans to rebaseline.
- Program Management.** After conducting an updated analysis of the aircraft design in late fiscal year 2024, the Coast Guard reduced the MH-60T service life from 20,000 to 19,000 flight hours. Coast Guard officials stated this resulted in grounding seven aircraft. To more quickly restore these aircraft to operations, the Coast Guard paused fielding increment 2 to focus on fielding additional increment 1 aircraft. As of June 2025, Coast Guard officials noted that two of the grounded aircraft were in stages of service life extension and they expected all grounded aircraft to return to service by September 2027.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Current baseline includes preliminary estimates for Increment 3.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



MEDIUM RANGE RECOVERY HELICOPTER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The MH-60T program aims to (1) extend the fleet's service life by replacing legacy aircraft—as they reach their 20,000 hour service life (increment 1)—with new or converted Navy hulls and (2) grow the fleet from 48 aircraft to at least 127 (increments 2 and 3). In November 2023, DHS approved the service life extension of 45 medium-range MH-60T helicopters, currently in the fleet, through the late 2040s (increment 1) and the acquisition of an additional 36 aircraft (increment 2). In April 2024, we found the Coast Guard did not assess whether the MH-60T helicopter best meets its mission needs as it phases out the MH-65 aircraft (GAO-24-106374). GAO recommended that Coast Guard assess the type of helicopters it requires. DHS agreed with this recommendation and Coast Guard officials stated they intend to conduct an assessment that meets the intent of the recommendation before establishing a baseline for increment 3.

Cost and Schedule Status

The program's current acquisition cost estimate of \$3.5 billion is within the current cost baseline of \$4.0 billion. Preliminary costs for increment 3 are included in both the cost estimate and baseline. Coast Guard officials stated they want to use as many new hulls as possible for all three increments because they have longer service lives. However, new hulls cost more than converting Navy hulls. Officials reported plans to procure additional hulls by modifying the increment 1 contract. The Coast Guard's estimate for the necessary facility upgrades to complete air station transitions in increments 2 and 3 is \$1.3 billion in then-year dollars.

According to Coast Guard officials, the program achieved increment 1 initial operational capability in August 2024 by delivering the third aircraft. Increment 2 achieved initial operational capability in May 2025 with the introduction of the first four aircraft. According to officials, due to increased funding from the OBBBA, the program plans to rebaseline.

Performance and Testing

The Coast Guard reported that the MH-60T helicopter met all six program KPPs based on operational data over 25 years. The KPPs relate to endurance, radius of action, cargo capacity, communications interoperability, navigational accuracy, and reliability.

Coast Guard officials stated that the MH-60T program completed cybersecurity testing in February 2025. The results of this test are classified, and will inform the scope of additional tests expected to occur in 2026.

Program Management

Increment 1 continues the service life extension of the existing fleet. Coast Guard officials stated that due to delays manufacturing new hulls, they anticipate fielding 45 aircraft using at least 10 converted Navy hulls and 35 new hulls. As of September 2025, the program has fielded a total of 10 aircraft through increment 1.

Increments 2 and 3 are expanding the MH-60T fleet to an overall size of at least 127 aircraft. The Coast Guard

expects to transition air stations from MH-65 aircraft to the MH-60T as these increments are developed and fielded. Increment 2 includes the transition of eight air stations with minimal infrastructure upgrades. Increment 3 includes transitioning air stations that require more extensive infrastructure upgrades, such as work needed to store aircraft in hangars. The Coast Guard plans to conduct work in increments 2 and 3 that would allow a subset of the aircraft to receive modifications to store them in the hangars on Coast Guard cutters. The program plans to accomplish this with the ability to fold the aircraft's rotor blades and tail.

In the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024, the Coast Guard reduced the MH-60T's service life from 20,000 hours to 19,000 hours, which Coast Guard officials attributed to an updated analysis of the original aircraft design and Coast Guard use, among other reasons. Coast Guard officials explained that this resulted in seven legacy aircraft being removed from service. Since this time, they explained that the program paused work on increment 2 to increase the production rate for increment 1. This will allow the Coast Guard to return the grounded aircraft to service sooner than expected. According to Coast Guard officials, the Coast Guard expects to return all seven grounded aircraft to service by September 2027. Coast Guard officials did not have an estimated effect on increment 2's schedule from the production pause. They stated the Coast Guard plans to conduct an analysis of alternatives for increment 3 focusing on maritime variants of the H-60 airframe, which should be completed by late 2027.

According to the Coast Guard, the MH-60T program received nearly \$2.3 billion in additional funding from the OBBBA, with which, officials noted, it expects to acquire additional aircraft.

Program Office Comments

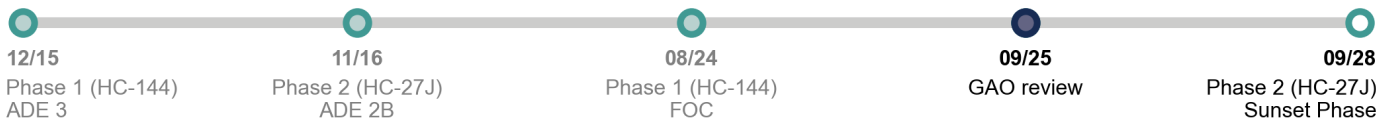
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The program office stated that the Coast Guard expects to rebaseline the MH-60T program in fiscal year 2026 in response to the additional funding from the OBBBA.

Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft

The Coast Guard uses HC-144 and HC-27J aircraft to conduct a variety of missions, including search and rescue and disaster response. Both aircraft can conduct maritime surveillance or transport cargo and personnel, and are twin-engine, propeller-driven platforms with a range of at least 2,100 nautical miles. In Phase 1, the Coast Guard acquired and upgraded 18 HC-144 aircraft. In 2016, Coast Guard added Phase 2 to the program and planned to upgrade 14 former Air Force aircraft into HC-27Js for Coast Guard missions (missionization). However, the Coast Guard later canceled HC-27J missionization in June 2024. This assessment covers future plans for both the HC-144 and the HC-27J following the Coast Guard's cancellation of HC-27J missionization.



Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 7 of 7 KPPs met for HC-144; HC-27J KPPs will not be tested.

Prime contractors: Airbus Group and GE for the HC-144

Contracting approach: In addition to the contractors above, for the HC-144, the program reported using firm-fixed-price contracts with vendors and interagency agreements for processor upgrades and related services. For the HC-27J, the program previously used an interagency agreement with the Navy to procure and install aircraft mission systems.

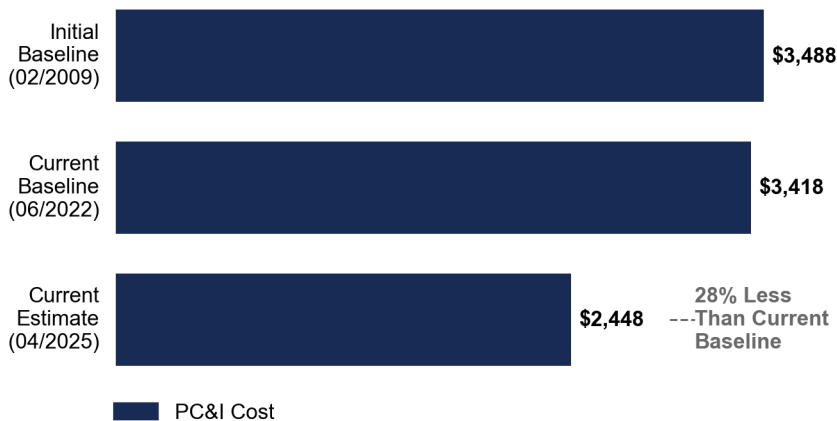
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

Next major milestone: Sunset HC-27J by September 2028

Key Findings

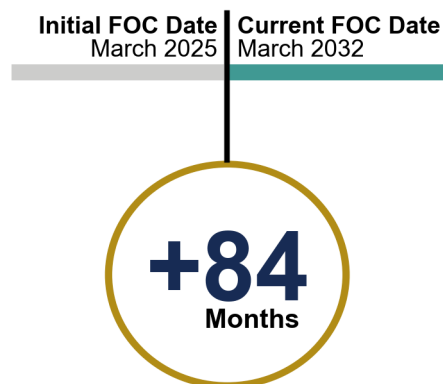
- Cost and Schedule.** As a result of canceling HC-27J missionization, officials said the program is currently in the process of revising its APB. Challenges with contracting and design instructions for HC-27J upgrades previously shifted the program's FOC by 7 years.
- Program Management.** Officials said the Coast Guard is planning a separate acquisition program to extend the service life of the HC-144, due to increased stress on the aircraft's wings and landing gear during landings. After canceling Phase 2 missionization, the Coast Guard is currently operating with less effective aircraft. The program plans to sunset the HC-27Js by the end of fiscal year 2028, and consequently may eventually not have enough aircraft to meet mission needs. Coast Guard is conducting a fleet mix analysis to identify possible alternatives to meet the capability gap.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Current estimate reflects HC-27J program cancellation.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: Current FOC represents the last documented date before the HC-27J modernization halt.

MEDIUM RANGE SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

Congress directed the Air Force to transfer used surplus HC-27Js to DHS in fiscal year 2014. The Coast Guard estimated in 2016 that restructuring the program to include the HC-27J and pausing HC-144 acquisitions would decrease costs compared to a larger, all-HC-144 program. The MRS program breached its schedule goals in July 2020 due to challenges with contracting and finalizing design instructions. The June 2022 revised baseline included changes to the planned schedule and cost for Phase 2 only, and accounted for time needed to finalize the HC-27J design and finish missionization. The changes added 84 months to the program's FOC and increased costs for the HC-27J. Specifically, from 2016 to 2024, the procurement unit cost of the HC-27J increased by 32 percent, and became larger than the procurement unit cost for the HC-144. In June 2024, Coast Guard leadership canceled Phase 2 missionizations, citing aircraft sustainment concerns and lack of fiscal year 2024 funding for the HC-27J. Program officials told us they had invested over \$360 million to nearly complete missionization of four HC-27J aircraft as of August 2024—aircraft the Coast Guard will no longer be using. They estimated that the cost to missionize the remaining aircraft would have been an additional \$256 million.

Cost and Schedule Status

The HC-144 cost estimate remained largely unchanged compared to 2024. The program's costs for personnel increased slightly due to cost model updates, but most other estimates did not change. The program delivered all 18 upgraded HC-144 aircraft by August 2024.

Following the cancellation of HC-27J missionization, the program plans to gradually retire the 10 non-missionized HC-27Js. The program reported receiving \$5 million for shutdown costs in fiscal year 2025 and did not report receiving OBBBA funds.

The HC-27J's procurement cost estimate decreased by 38 percent, or \$516 million in then-year dollars, primarily as a result of canceling missionization. Officials said the program is currently revising its APB to reflect the end of HC-27J missionizations.

Performance and Testing

As of March 2022, the HC-144 met all of its KPPs based on testing conducted in 2012 and 2021. As a result of canceling HC-27J missionization, the program has no additional operational testing planned.

Program Management

Officials said the Coast Guard is planning a separate level 3 acquisition for an HC-144 service life extension program (SLEP), and reported that the program reached ADE 1 in April 2025. The SLEP would enable the manufacturer's original 40-year service life by increasing the number of allowable landings from 15,440 to 27,500. In 2023, the program estimated that without a SLEP, the aircraft's service life would decrease to 23 years. Officials said Coast Guard training needs result in the aircraft performing twice as many landings as they were originally designed for. Additionally, Coast Guard flight profiles require flying longer at low altitudes. Both factors place extra stress on wings and landing gear compared to the

original aircraft design. Increasing the allowable landings accounts for the extra stress and restores the aircraft's service life. The program is coordinating with the manufacturer to establish a life extension plan. To decrease wear, the program enacted changes to flight maneuvers and increased inspections.

Four of the 14 HC-27Js were being missionized at the time of cancellation. The program intends to salvage parts from these aircraft to sustain the 10 in-service HC-27Js. It is also coordinating the transfer of unneeded parts (e.g., auxiliary power units) to U.S. Army Special Operations Command, which uses similar aircraft. As of November 2024, Coast Guard had deployed an interim sensor and camera solution for the unmissionized HC-27Js, and Coast Guard officials say the aircraft are capable of fulfilling statutory mission needs. However, the aircraft have reduced detection capabilities compared to a missionized aircraft, and may be less effective at some missions, such as search-and-rescue.

The Coast Guard is producing an fixed-wing analysis of alternatives, which will include a plan for replacing HC-27J capabilities, estimated to be complete by late summer 2026. The agency's near-term plan is to meet mission needs with other aircraft. This includes the separate LRS program achieving its FOC of 22 HC-130Js, sustaining the HC-144 into the 2040s, and procurement of long-range unmanned aircraft systems using 2025 OBBBA funds. Officials said the fleet mix analysis was considering several long term options, such as acquiring additional HC-130Js.

The program reported no effects on contracting, staffing, or funding as a result of the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution or executive orders.

Program Office Comments

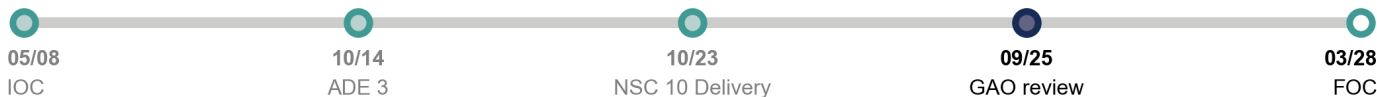
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. Coast Guard provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



National Security Cutter

The Coast Guard uses the NSC to conduct search and rescue, migrant and drug interdiction, environmental protection, and other missions. The NSC replaces and provides improved capabilities over the Coast Guard's High Endurance Cutters. The NSC carries helicopters, cutter boats, and uncrewed aerial vehicles; provides an extended on-scene presence at forward-deployed locations; and operates worldwide. The Coast Guard originally planned to acquire eight NSCs. However, Congress has since appropriated funds for three additional NSCs. We recently reported on the program in GAO-25-107222 and last reported on it in our annual assessment in 2022 (GAO-22-104684).

Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 19 of 19 met.

Prime contractor: Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII)

Contracting approach: The program has a single prime contractor for building NSCs. The program also uses several naval warfare centers and offices within Naval Sea Systems Command to acquire Navy-developed and -maintained systems.

Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

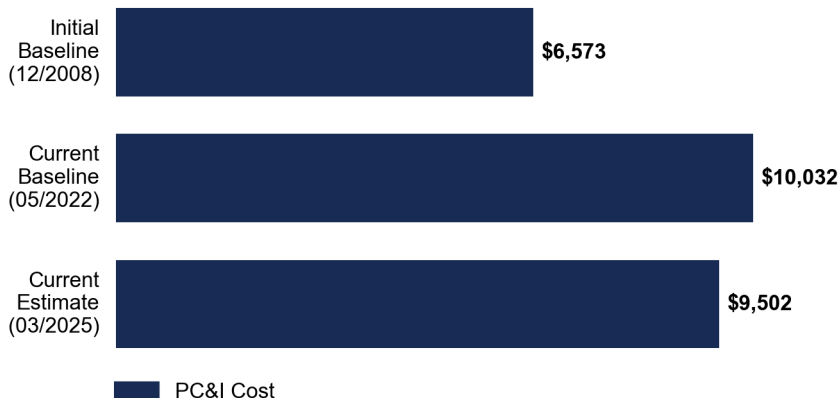
Next major milestone: FOC by March 2028

Current Status

In fiscal year 2021, HII began construction on NSC 11, the final ship. However, the Coast Guard and HII agreed to stop construction of NSC 11 in May 2025 after they discovered pervasive corrosion of steel plates. The program attributed the corrosion to HII not properly preserving the steel after buying it before construction. HII estimated that remediation would have cost up to \$117 million and delayed ship delivery to February 2029—more than 4 years later than planned.

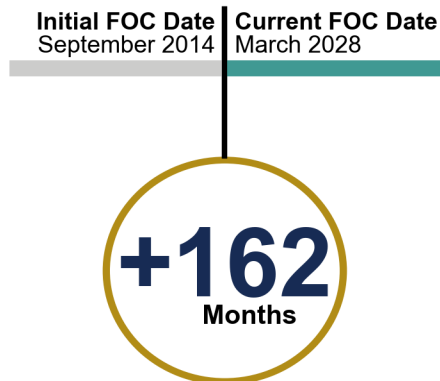
As of June 2025, the Coast Guard had expended \$263 million on NSC 11, almost half of the ship's funding. As part of the cancellation, DHS reported HII will provide \$135 million in spare parts. According to officials, the program updated its cost and schedule goals in December 2025 and anticipates achieving FOC by 2027 with NSC 10.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Officials state the program approved a new baseline in Dec. 2025. However, this graphic does not reflect changes to program cost after Sept. 2025, including any due to the cancellation of NSC 11.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: The program added three ships after the initial FOC was set. Officials state the new approved FOC date is Sept. 2027.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment, and they provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate. The program stated it submitted a revised APB to DHS for approval.

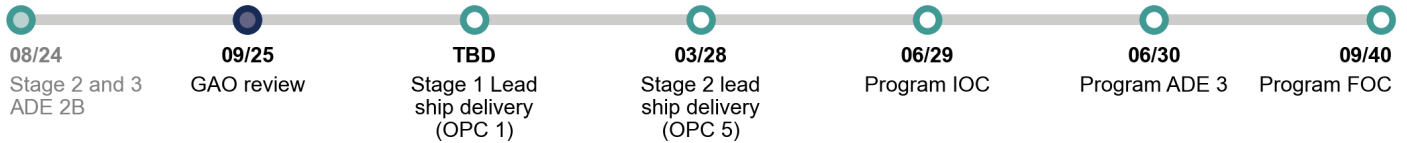
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Offshore Patrol Cutter

The Coast Guard plans to acquire 25 OPCs to replace its aging Medium Endurance Cutters. The OPC is designed for long-distance transit, extended on-scene presence, and operations with deployable aircraft and small boats. The OPC will enable the Coast Guard to continue conducting multi-mission operations including homeland security, law enforcement, and search and rescue. The Coast Guard is acquiring OPCs in three stages. This assessment covers all three stages, although the Coast Guard has only awarded contracts for stage 1 (OPC 1-4) and stage 2 (OPC 5-15). The Coast Guard plans to acquire OPCs 16-25 under a third stage in the future.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of 6 KPPs has not begun.

Prime contractors: Eastern Shipbuilding Group, Inc. (ESG) for stage 1; Austal USA, LLC (Austal) for stage 2

Contracting approach: The program's contracts include firm-fixed-price and fixed-price incentive (firm-target) line items for the design and construction work.

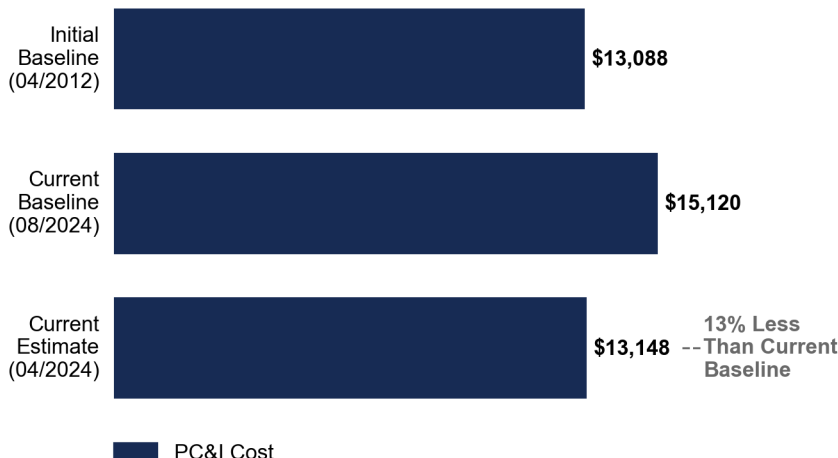
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

Next major milestone: Delivery of stage 1 lead ship (OPC 1) is to be determined

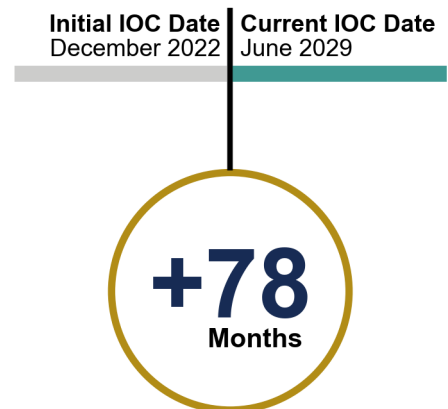
Key Findings

- Cost and schedule.** As of December 2025, ESG had stopped work on OPCs 1-4 and it was unclear whether it would deliver any ships. This affects subsequent milestones, such as IOC, which was already 6.5 years behind schedule. The program is also updating its cost estimate to account for changes with stage 1.
- Design and construction.** The Coast Guard authorized Austal to begin construction of its first ship (OPC 5) in August 2024 and second ship (OPC 6) in August 2025 before demonstrating design stability in accordance with shipbuilding leading practices we identified. Our prior work has found that this increases the risk of rework and schedule delays.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



OFFSHORE PATROL CUTTER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

In 2012, DHS approved OPC's initial acquisition program baseline. Since then, the program has rebaselined three times. First, the program rebaselined in 2014 to extend its schedule for source selection on preliminary design contracts. The Coast Guard subsequently selected ESG as the shipbuilder. ESG's contract included design work and options to construct up to nine OPCs. However, after a hurricane devastated ESG's facilities in 2018, DHS granted the shipbuilder extraordinary contractual relief for the design and construction of OPCs 1-4 (stage 1) and directed the program to recomplete the requirement for the remaining ships. The Coast Guard rebaselined a second time in 2020 to reflect the restructured program and awarded a contract to Austal in 2022 for design and construction of OPCs 5-15 (stage 2). The program rebaselined a third time in August 2024 to update its cost and schedule goals to account for stage 2.

Since October 2020, we have made more than a dozen recommendations to DHS and the Coast Guard regarding management of the OPC program and its shipbuilding policy (see GAO-26-107583; GAO-23-105805; and GAO-21-9). For example, in October 2020, we recommended that the Coast Guard revise its acquisition policy to require shipbuilding programs—including OPC—to demonstrate a stable design according to shipbuilding leading practices we identified prior to starting construction. As of December 2025, this recommendation and eight others remained open.

Cost and Schedule Status

As of December 2025, ESG had stopped work on OPCs 1-4 and it was unclear whether it would deliver any ships. Since 2020, we have reported that delivery of stage 1 ships had been delayed multiple times and ESG had made slow progress with technology development, design, and construction. In November 2025, we found that the Coast Guard's efforts to address ESG's slow progress by modifying the stage 1 contract were largely unsuccessful (GAO-26-107583). Continued challenges, such as rework caused by design instability, further delayed delivery of OPC 1 from December 2025 to at least December 2026, resulting in a schedule breach.

In July 2025, the Coast Guard terminated OPCs 3 and 4 for default as a part of an ongoing review of the stage 1 contract. In November 2025, ESG suspended work on OPCs 1 and 2 due to significant financial strain caused by the program's structure and conditions. As of December 2025, the Coast Guard was assessing the path forward for stage 1.

Additionally, the Coast Guard is updating the OPC cost estimate. In November 2025, we found that the cost goal in the August 2024 baseline was based on outdated information and reported in the aggregate for all 25 ships. We recommended that the program establish cost goals for each OPC stage to improve oversight, and DHS concurred. As of December 2025, the Coast Guard was still working to update the OPC cost estimate to account for changes in stage 1.

Design and Construction

Design instability is also a risk for stage 2, which could lead to construction delays. In November 2025, we found that the Coast Guard and Austal incorporated some key elements of our leading practices for ship design into stage 2, such as maintaining a strong in-house design workforce. However, the Coast Guard authorized Austal

to begin construction of its first ship (OPC 5) in August 2024 and second ship (OPC 6) in August 2025 before demonstrating design stability according to our shipbuilding leading practices. For example, 3D modeling of distributive systems that run throughout the ship, such as the communication system, was incomplete and did not include vendor-furnished information. Additionally, the davit—the program's sole critical technology, used to raise and lower OPC's small boats into the water—had not been demonstrated in a realistic environment.

We recommended that the program demonstrate the stage 2 design is stable according to shipbuilding leading practices we identified before authorizing construction of additional OPCs. DHS did not concur and stated that it believed the design requirements in the Coast Guard's acquisition policy were sufficient. We continue to believe our recommendation is warranted, as our prior work on shipbuilding leading practices has found that design instability increases the risk of costly rework and schedule delays.

Program Management

The OPC program received \$4.3 billion in the OBBBA, which Coast Guard officials stated is sufficient to fund completion of stage 2.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The program office noted that challenges with stage 1 extended beyond design-related rework. For stage 2, the program office stated it has a high level of confidence in the davit and stated that it exceeded the Coast Guard's design maturity requirements at the start of construction. However, this statement conflicts with what we found in November 2025.



Polar Security Cutter

The PSC program intends to assist the Coast Guard in maintaining access to the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The Coast Guard will require its PSCs to conduct multiple missions, including ice operations, defense readiness, marine environmental protection, and search and rescue. Currently, the Coast Guard plans to acquire three PSCs to replace and expand its heavy polar icebreaker fleet. This fleet currently consists of one operational cutter that conducts an annual operation in the Antarctic.

Source: Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of 4 KPPs has not yet begun.

Prime contractor: Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding, LLC

Contracting approach: The program awarded a contract to the shipbuilder—formerly known as VT Halter Marine, Inc.—in 2019, which included line items for the design and construction work. In March 2025, the program modified the contract, increasing the target cost, profit, ceiling, and total price to reflect cost growth on the lead PSC, among other revisions.

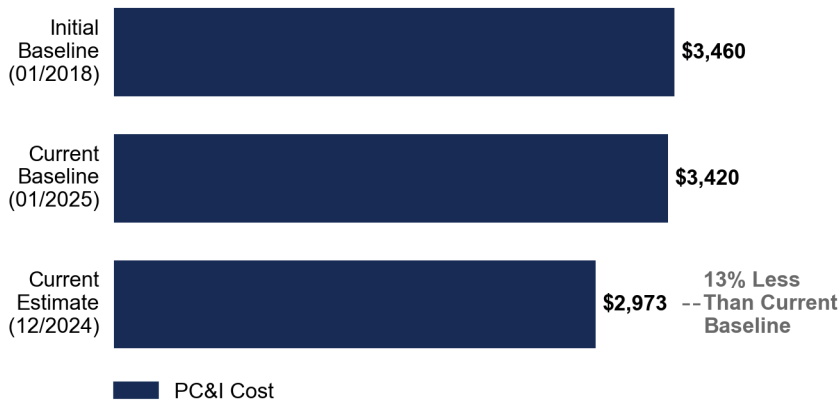
Life-cycle path: System/Product development

Next major milestone: Lead ship delivery in March 2033

Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** In January 2025, the program increased its cost goals and delayed schedule goals for the lead ship. The updated baseline shows the lead PSC will cost up to \$3.4 billion, nearly the cost for all three PSCs under the initial baseline. The updated baseline also reflects a 9-year delay for lead PSC delivery from the initial baseline. The program is in contract negotiations for PSCs 2 and 3 and will not know the full program costs until negotiations are completed in late 2026, according to officials. To achieve the first PSC's schedule, shipyard plans show the contractor's workforce must grow significantly, by roughly 40 percent, between 2025 and mid-2026.
- Construction.** In April 2025, the program achieved milestone ADE 2C to start full construction of the lead PSC. Officials said the program plans to start 16 sections—out of 85—by the end of 2025, with eight planned to complete by early 2026.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Initial baseline includes PSCs 1, 2 and 3. Current baseline and current estimate are for PSC 1 only. PSCs 2 and 3 have yet to be baselined.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



POLAR SECURITY CUTTER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The Coast Guard established its initial acquisition program baseline for the PSC program in 2018 and awarded a detail design and construction contract to VT Halter Marine, Inc. now Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding, in 2019. The program had revised its baseline two times prior to 2025: (1) in 2021 to reflect higher costs and a delayed schedule, and (2) in 2022 due to schedule delays related to COVID-19.

Cost and Schedule Status

In January 2025, the Coast Guard significantly revised its baseline a third time to reflect the effects of ongoing challenges with the program. The revised baseline includes a cost goal of \$3.4 billion for the lead PSC—nearly the expected cost for three PSCs under the initial baseline. Further, the baseline reflects a lead PSC delivery goal of March 2033, or a 9-year delay from the initial baseline. According to the Coast Guard, factors that contributed to the significant cost increases and schedule delays included poor program management and lack of insight into the extent of challenges, which stemmed in part from government and contractor inexperience. Other factors included stalled design progress, effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and inflation.

PSC's revised baseline reflects some schedule risks but not others, calling into question whether the lead PSC will be delivered later than 2033. For example, the revised baseline reflects a PSC construction schedule that ranges from 5 to 8 years instead of just over 3 years in previous baselines. Officials said this range is mainly due to a risk identified by the Navy to the ship's operational control system. The Coast Guard plans to mitigate this risk by creating a land-based test facility at the shipyard to streamline production and integration. However, the program set the lead PSC's baseline without conducting an integrated baseline review with the shipbuilder, which, according to officials, means the baseline does not include current contractor data. Another risk to the lead PSC's delivery schedule includes significantly increasing the workforce at the shipyard, by roughly 40 percent, between 2025 to mid-2026 and determining the total workforce needs to build all three ships.

After setting the baseline in early 2025, the Coast Guard subsequently increased the contract's target cost, profit, ceiling and total price by nearly \$1 billion for the lead PSC to reflect the revised baseline to address cost growth, schedule delays, and a request for additional funding from the shipyard. However, the Coast Guard does not yet have a DHS approved cost or schedule baseline for the two remaining PSCs. Finalizing the preliminary estimates for the second and third PSC depends on completion of negotiations with the shipbuilder, which officials said is planned for late 2026. The program reported receiving \$4.3 billion from the OBBBA. Officials stated the funding covers completion of the first two PSCs and the purchase of long-lead materials for the third PSC.

Design and Construction

In April 2025, the program achieved ADE 2C—approval to commence full construction of the lead PSC's 85 sections—after completing 95 percent of PSC's functional design. This falls short of leading practices for shipbuilding, which call for completing 100 percent of the functional design, including all major distributive systems, but meets the Coast Guard standard. In 2023, DHS agreed that the PSC's design needed to be mature prior to authorizing lead ship construction.

Areas in which the functional design remains incomplete run through distributive systems in the ship. However, officials said the remaining design work is primarily low diameter piping for drainage, indicating that it does not impact major systems, and that incorporating this into the design will last for most of construction. We previously found that significant rework can occur late in construction, resulting in subsequent cost growth and delays, if design of distributive systems are not completed prior to construction.

Prior to full construction approval, the shipyard started construction on eight sections of the ship to inform production and, according to program officials, plans to start 16 sections in total by December 2025. Of those initial eight sections, the shipbuilder expects to complete four in 2025 and four in early 2026, allowing it to combine the first sections to build up the ship. Officials said while construction risks vary based on the complexity of each section, they consider the initial eight sections to be lower risk. By December 2025, the program plans to have started roughly 20 percent of the ship, with officials noting the shipyard plans to begin two sections a month post-December 2025.

Program Office Comments

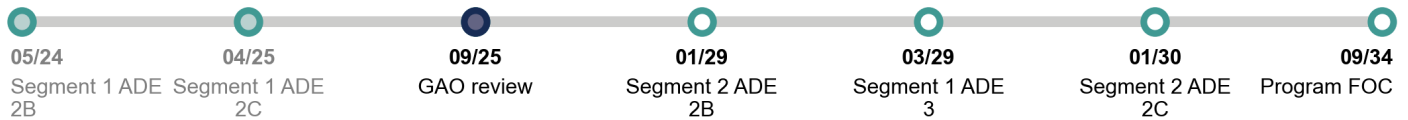
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. The PSC program said that the existing shipbuilding contract is the fastest and most cost-effective method to acquire the PSC program of record. Further, they said that this approach leverages completed design and production work to ensure the quickest possible delivery of this vital national asset.

Waterways Commerce Cutter

The WCC is intended to replace the Coast Guard’s legacy fleet of construction and river/inland buoy tenders—cutters with an average age of about 60 years. The primary mission for the WCCs is to establish, maintain, and operate aids to navigation, known as buoys, on the western rivers and inland waterways. This supports the flow of economic activity along the waterways. The Coast Guard is acquiring a total of 30 cutters in two distinct segments. Segment 1 will replace the river buoy tenders and inland construction tenders with a nearly common design, and segment 2 will replace the inland buoy tenders.



Source: Birdon America, Inc. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of 5 KPPs has not begun.

Prime contractor: Birdon America, Inc.

Contracting approach: The Coast Guard awarded an indefinite-delivery, indefinite quantity firm-fixed-price contract to Birdon America, Inc. in October 2022 for the design and engineering of segment 1. Officials report that this includes options for production of up to 27 cutters. The three cutters under segment 2 will be built commercially using a government-led design.

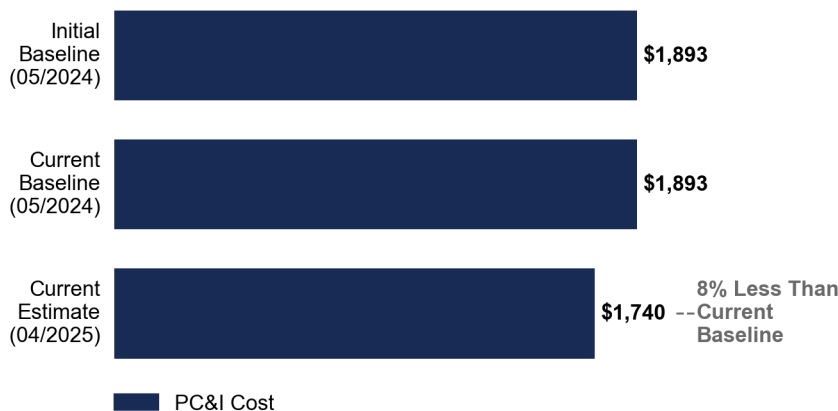
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

Next major milestone: Planned Segment 1 ADE 3 by May 2028

Key Findings

- Schedule.** In April 2025, DHS granted the WCC program ADE 2C approval, which included authorization to start construction, subject to certain conditions. The program met the Coast Guard’s design maturity metrics by completing at least 95 percent of the functional design before starting construction. Leading practices suggest that the functional design should be fully complete before starting construction. Not fully completing design can lead to cost increases and schedule delays.
- Testing.** The Coast Guard’s independent test agent conducted an early operational assessment and released its report in November 2024. The test report shows an area of high risk for the program related to the ability of the cutter to deliver emergency power for steering and propulsion during an electrical power failure. The assessment recommended that the program investigate solutions for maintaining the ability to stop and steer during a power disruption.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Current baseline and estimate include preliminary costs for Segment 2.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



WATERWAYS COMMERCE CUTTER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

In October 2022, the Coast Guard awarded a contract to Birdon America, Inc. for the design and engineering of segment 1 cutters, which consists of 16 river buoy tenders and 11 inland construction tenders, according to program officials. The Coast Guard expects segment 2, consisting of three inland buoy tenders, to address more unique requirements and use a government-led design because there is nothing available commercially that meets the Coast Guard's needs. The Coast Guard intends to solicit proposals from industry for segment 2 to construct the cutters to that specific design. In addition to the cutters in segments 1 and 2, the program baseline includes costs to acquire 21-foot boats for use on all variants. The Coast Guard reported awarding an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract in August 2025 to procure up to 66 of these aluminum hull boats for a total contract value of \$11.8 million.

Cost and Schedule Status

In April 2025, DHS approved ADE 2C for WCC segment 1 on the condition that the contractor demonstrated completed drawings supporting the first 90 days of construction. At the start of construction in June 2025, the Coast Guard had completed at least 95 percent of the cutter's functional design. Coast Guard officials stated that the remaining work included designing the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system and the electrical system. These are all distributive systems that can affect large sections of the cutter's design. While this design maturity level meets the Coast Guard's goals, leading practices suggest that a ship's functional design should be complete before construction starts. We have previously found starting construction without a stable design increases the risk of costly rework and delays.

The Coast Guard previously expected to release a request for proposals for detailed design and construction of segment 2 by the end of fiscal year 2025. The Coast Guard delayed this event to fiscal year 2028 as they prioritized other efforts for funding. Coast Guard officials stated they continue to refine the request for proposals and are incorporating lessons learned from segment 1.

The program's current acquisition cost of \$1.74 billion is within the current cost baseline of \$1.9 billion, and includes preliminary costs for segment 2. In addition, the Coast Guard's estimate for shore infrastructure upgrades at WCC homeports increased by 26 percent to \$508 million (then-year dollars) between fiscal years 2023 and 2031. While the WCC program included these costs in the life-cycle cost estimate, the funding is managed through the Coast Guard's shore infrastructure office. The WCC program's highest risk is related to the completion of these facilities since the shore infrastructure program office is overtaxed with other work. The program reported it is investigating mitigation solutions for this risk.

Performance and Testing

The Coast Guard's independent test agent conducted an early operational assessment of both segment 1 cutters and released its report in November 2024. One high risk area and several areas of moderate risk were identified.

The high risk area relates to the ability of the WCC to provide emergency power for steering and propulsion during an electrical power failure. The testers found that it could take up to 45 seconds for the emergency generator to start. While this meets the program requirements, the WCC would be unable to steer until the emergency generator starts. The assessment recommended the program investigate solutions to maintain the ability to stop and steer during a power disruption. Coast Guard officials stated the WCC is designed to provide power sooner than 45 seconds and the program intends to verify this during operational testing. The program plans to conduct an operational assessment in fiscal year 2026 and operational testing in fiscal year 2027.

Program Management

In 2024, the program reported that Birdon planned to have about 175 personnel at its shipyard around the time that construction started. As of September 2025, program officials reported Birdon had increased personnel at its shipyard to about 145, short of the planned amount. Birdon officials stated that they need a workforce of about 400 to produce the Coast Guard's goal of 4 WCCs per year. The Coast Guard is tracking workforce as a program risk since it has concerns regarding the shipyard's ability to increase personnel due to competition from other shipbuilders in the region.

The WCC program reported that it is facing a potential funding shortfall through fiscal year 2030 that would prevent the program from reaching the full production rate of four cutters per year at the pace originally planned. The cumulative projected shortfall is about \$576 million over this timeframe. However, the WCC program received \$162 million in additional funding from the OBBBA, which officials said could alleviate some of this shortfall, pending funding in future years. The Coast Guard reported plans to procure 3 WCCs in segment 1 with this funding.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



U.S. Customs and **Border Protection**



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Automated Commercial Environment

ACE is a cloud-based platform that is intended to collect, process, and manage electronically submitted trade data from the international trade community. It aims to provide private and public sector stakeholders with access to information required to release imported cargo and clear exported cargo. In 2018, CBP deployed the ACE Core to manage trade data. In 2023, CBP deployed the final increment of ACE Collections, an effort to modernize the processing and collection of duties owed on imported goods. This assessment focuses on ACE IT modernization efforts. CBP's tailored approach for ACE modernization requires efforts to go through three review phases followed by semi-annual reviews.

Source: CBP and stock.adobe.com. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 4 out of 4 met.

Number of prime contractors: 18

Contracting approach: The program uses multiple contracts of various types, including firm-fixed-price and cost-plus-award-fee, for IT services, software development, and sustainment.

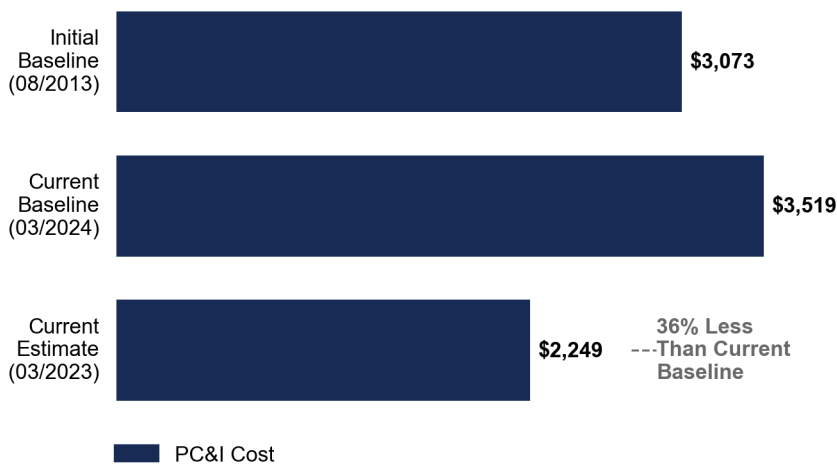
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: DHS review for the Execution Planning Phase by the end of March 2026

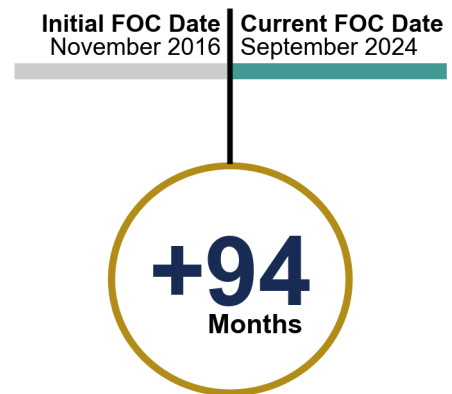
Key Findings

- Schedule.** According to program officials, PARM approved phase 1 for the program and instructed the program to continue to the next phase in September 2025. Program officials also identified high priority requirements—57 enhancements—as a risk to the program's schedule. DHS approved ACE Collections for ADE 3 in December 2024.
- Program Management.** Program officials report staffing shortfalls with six positions vacant out of a total of 14, including the deputy program manager. According to officials, the program is taking steps to temporarily mitigate the shortfall, including using contractor staff and seeking to hire within CBP during the hiring freeze.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: ACE achieved FOC in 2018 for all functionality except Collections.

AUTOMATED COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

Beginning in 2001, CBP designed ACE to replace legacy import and export systems with a modern, automated system that they expected to increase the efficiency of operations at U.S. ports and enable faster decision-making. In 2009, CBP halted ACE development and placed the program into breach status because of cost and schedule growth. In 2013, after CBP adopted an Agile process and established a new program baseline, DHS removed the program from breach status. In that same year, DHS approved the program's ADE 2B. In 2017, the program reported a second cost and schedule breach. Following that breach, CBP separated the system's functionality into two segments, ACE Core and ACE Collections. DHS approved ACE Core for FOC and subsequently deployed it in 2018. CBP planned to develop and deploy ACE Collections incrementally through seven releases. In 2019, DHS approved the ADE 2B for Collections software Release 1 and later that year Collections achieved IOC. In 2020, DHS approved ADE 2B for Collections software Releases 2 through 7. ACE deployed Release 7—the final release needed to retire the existing legacy system—in November 2023. In September 2024, CBP declared FOC for ACE Collections and the program is now focused on modernization.

Cost and Schedule Status

In December 2024, DHS approved ACE Collections for ADE 3. The ADE 3 decision also reemphasized that CBP would continue to manage ACE modernization as a major acquisition. ACE modernization will follow a tailored approach that tracks cost and performance through a series of reviews instead of establishing cost and schedule baselines.

Previously, we reported that ACE planned to return to DHS's Acquisition Review Board by March 2025 to present the scope of work plan for the ACE modernization. Program officials stated that ACE did not return to the review board for phase 1 approval on schedule due to leadership and department-wide changes. Instead, officials explained that the program submitted the documentation needed for the review to DHS. Program officials also stated that PARM and CBP's Office of Acquisition instructed the program to continue planning and preparing for the next phase. In September 2025, the program received approval from PARM for phase 1 and permission to move to the next phase, according to program officials. Officials reported that the phase 2 review board meeting is scheduled to take place by the end of March 2026.

We also previously reported that the program was monitoring an O&S shortfall. Program officials said that CBP provided the program \$88 million in O&S funding. Officials explained that the O&S funding was the result of the distribution of the continuing resolution funding for CBP. As a result of this additional funding, the program closed the O&S shortfall risk in May 2025. The program reported it did not receive OBBBA funding.

Program officials also told us that they have identified high priority enhancement requirements as a risk to the program's plan and schedule. Officials explained that this is a risk the program has faced for a long time, but the number—57 enhancements—has been higher this year compared with prior years primarily due to executive

orders. For example, an April 2025 executive order removed duty-free treatment from certain Chinese goods, which required CBP to temporarily suspend selected regulatory provisions and issue guidance as needed to implement the executive order and ensure proper collection of duties. Officials added that addressing new requirements can cause delays to other planned enhancement efforts. To address this risk, officials stated, they maintain a tracker to identify and balance new priorities.

Performance and Testing

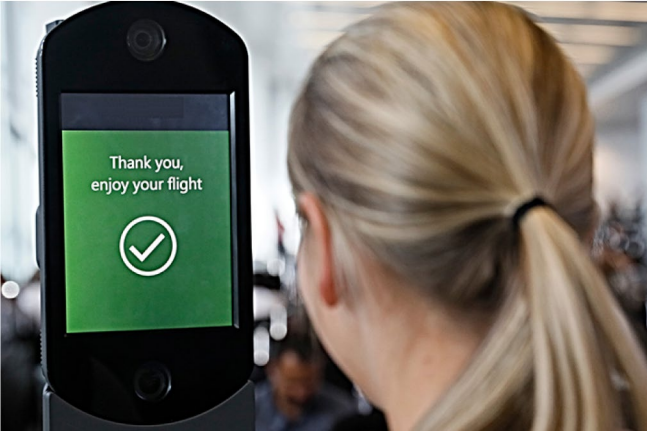
Program officials stated that PARM instructed the program to continue planning and preparing for the next phase, which includes a test and evaluation strategy brief. They expect to complete this brief by the end of March 2026. Program officials also told us that they did not conduct any cybersecurity testing in fiscal year 2025.

Program Management

Program officials stated that they are facing staffing shortfalls after receiving additional resources due to an Office of Trade reorganization. In January 2026, program officials told us that only eight of 14 positions are filled—resulting in six vacancies, including the deputy program manager and the modernization project manager. To address this shortfall, the program is using contractor staff and hiring from within CBP during the hiring freeze, according to officials.

Program Office Comments

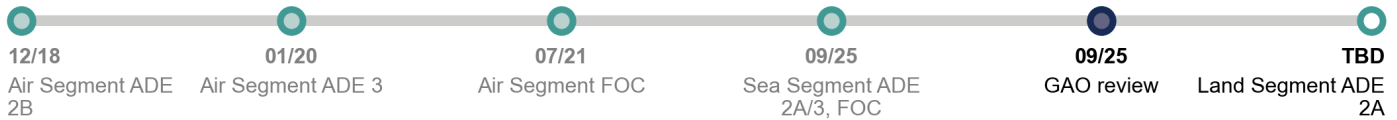
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. Program officials stated that funding is adequate for the initial phases of ACE modernization and the program is working to fill some of the vacancies in early 2026.



Biometric Entry-Exit

BE-E is developing capabilities to match travelers to photos in DHS's databases through its Traveler Verification Service as they enter and exit the U.S. at air, sea, land vehicle, and land pedestrian ports of entry. CBP plans to implement BE-E in segments that align with those environments. The program deployed the air segment in 2021 and deployed the sea segment in 2025. The equipment that captures biometric photo data for the air and sea segments will be owned and operated by airlines and cruise lines. Our assessment primarily focuses on the sea segment.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 4 out of 4 met for the air segment; 4 out of 4 met for the sea segment.

Number of prime contractors: 6

Contracting approach: The program has used multiple contracts to procure camera and IT services, as well as identity verification services, among other things. Officials stated that they are planning to issue a request for proposals to support the land segment.

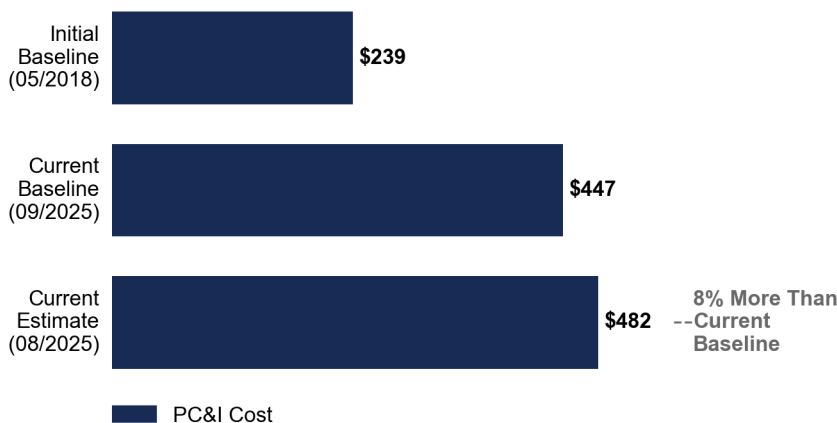
Life-cycle path: System/Product Development

Next major milestone: Land segment ADE 2A is to be determined

Key Findings

- **Cost and Schedule.** While the program continues to face challenges due to lower than expected fee collection, officials reported receiving \$45 million through the fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution. The sea segment achieved ADE 2A/3 and FOC in September 2025.
- **Program Management.** Officials reported that they plan to split the program's next segment, the land segment, into three different phases—inbound vehicle, outbound pedestrian, and outbound vehicle. In the near-term, they plan to issue a request for proposals to start developing the technology needed to execute this segment.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: Current baseline excludes estimates for land segment.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months

Note: Program's current acquisition program baseline does not include milestone dates for future events in the land segment.

BIOMETRIC ENTRY-EXIT

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

In 2015, Congress authorized an increase in certain visa application fees over a period of 10 years, with a portion of the increased fees—up to \$1 billion—set aside for the implementation of the BE-E program. Congress initially authorized the fee increase through fiscal year 2025 and later extended it through fiscal year 2027. DHS originally planned to collect fees on new visa applications and applications for visa extensions, but after two federal courts stopped the agency from implementing this approach, DHS only collected fees on new applications. Prior to ADE 3—approval of full-rate production and deployment—for the air segment, the program breached its cost and schedule baselines. According to program officials, this was due in part to delays in completing testing that affected their baseline schedule goal. Additionally, as the program updated their LCCE in preparation for ADE 3, it resulted in a cost increase that indicated a cost breach. In December 2019, the program updated its acquisition program baseline document, which removed the program from breach status.

Cost and Schedule Status

The program continues to face funding challenges due to receiving fewer visa application fees than expected. In fiscal year 2025 the program reported collecting approximately \$13 million in visa application fees. This is less than what the Congressional Budget Office originally projected in 2016, when it estimated that approximately \$115 million per year would be available to the program through fee collection. The fee increase that funds the program is scheduled to end in fiscal year 2027. According to officials they are hopeful that Congress will extend this deadline to allow them to continue collecting on these fees.

In addition to the fees collected, program officials reported that the program received \$45 million through CBP's realignment of fiscal year 2025 continuing resolution funds. They emphasized that this is not a recurring adjustment to the base budget, but is meant to help address funding shortfalls in operations and maintenance. Officials also reported receiving \$613 million in funds from the OBBBA. This will allow the program to continue efforts on the land segment while maintaining the air and sea environments.

The program completed ADE 2A/3 and FOC for the sea segment in September 2025. That means the system is capable of biometrically processing all cruise line traveler arrivals and departures. The program has not determined future land segment milestones.

Performance and Testing

The program completed operational testing for the sea segment in fiscal year 2023. According to program officials, the Office of Test and Evaluation may recommend additional follow-on testing for the sea segment, but since both the air and sea segments use the same technology, any additional testing would likely be limited in scope.

Program Management

According to officials, the program will conduct the next segment, the land segment, in three phases. They stated that the first phase will be for inbound vehicle entry, the second phase will be outbound pedestrian, and the third phase will be outbound vehicle. Officials stated that while pedestrian entry and exit will use similar technology to the air and sea segments, the vehicle phases will require different technology. They explained that this is because with vehicles, the land port of entry is not a controlled environment in the same way that the air and sea ports of entry are and, as a result, the system will need specialized cameras that can identify individuals in vehicles travelling at speed and from different angles. The program said it plans to complete a more detailed acquisition strategy for the land segment.

Once the program receives OBBBA funding, officials stated that they plan to issue a request for proposals related to the land segment. They have already hosted some technology demonstrations and conducted an analysis of alternatives to refine the requirements for the proposal. The program is currently documenting the findings from these activities.

Program officials stated that they faced staffing shortfalls, but now only have one non-critical vacancy. Due to the hiring freeze, the program is only able to leverage staff from within CBP to fill vacancies.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Common Operating Picture

COP aims to integrate existing U.S. Border Patrol sensor systems to provide an efficient method for viewing activity at U.S. borders and improve information management, situational awareness, and decision-making capabilities. COP will analyze sensor data to identify and classify detections as potential threats or items of interest. Border Patrol agents will use the data to inform their response and resolution, when necessary. The program expects to provide a software solution that integrates with existing and future sensors and required IT to operate COP at the command and control facility. COP is currently planned in four Agile themes or iterative increments that build on each other.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: IT

Acquisition Level: 2

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of the program's 4 KPPs has not begun.

Prime contractor: None

Contracting approach: CBP officials said COP plans to use existing General Services Administration contracts and strategic sourcing for any necessary items and services.

Life-cycle path: Incremental software development

Next major milestone: To be determined

Current Status

According to CBP officials, COP is effectively on pause while DHS determines whether the program will operate as a project within CBP's Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST) program. COP has delayed its ADE 2A milestone until further notice. The COP program did not receive any funding in fiscal years 2024 or 2025, and CBP officials stated that they did not receive any OBBBA funding. As a result, program officials are working with DHS leadership to determine if COP should be dissolved as a program and realigned as a project to continue its operations. While DHS is evaluating the future of the program, the department still considers COP an acquisition program, according to CBP officials.

If DHS and CBP choose to operate COP as a project within IST, the current program would be administratively closed, according to CBP officials. Additionally, these officials noted that the future COP project could also include other applications beyond its current software platform capability and expand integration to additional Border Patrol detection assets.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. DHS officials stated the program is now referred to as the Operational Picture for Tactical Intelligence and Control (OPTIC) and is a project under IST.

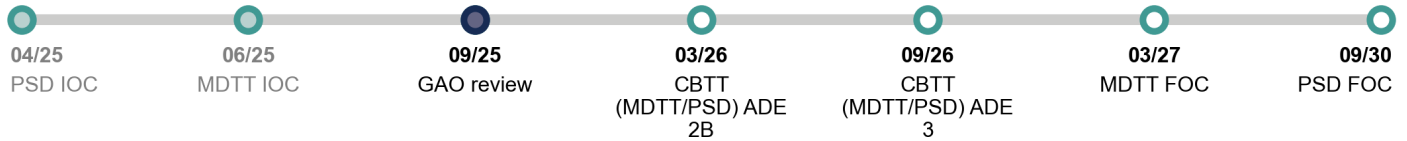
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Cross Border Tunnel Threat

CBTT is intended to help U.S. Customs and Border Protection monitor subsurface activity along the U.S. land border and to detect and remediate cross border tunnels. CBTT is comprised of two underlying efforts: (1) Persistent Surveillance and Detection (PSD) provides continuous subsurface detection capability through permanently installed technology; and (2) Mobile Detection Tunnel Toolkit (MDTT) is a suite of handheld and portable tools that provides enhanced detection capabilities for the local geology in areas with and without a deployed PSD system. The program planned to field an initial operational capability before establishing a formal baseline and committing to the full capability.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Mixed (IT/Non-IT)

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing is underway for PSD and MDTT.

Prime contractor: Initial contract awarded in January 2026 according to program officials

Contracting approach: CBP has conducted a down select from three vendors to one based on past performance and ability to meet accelerated production timelines, according to DHS.

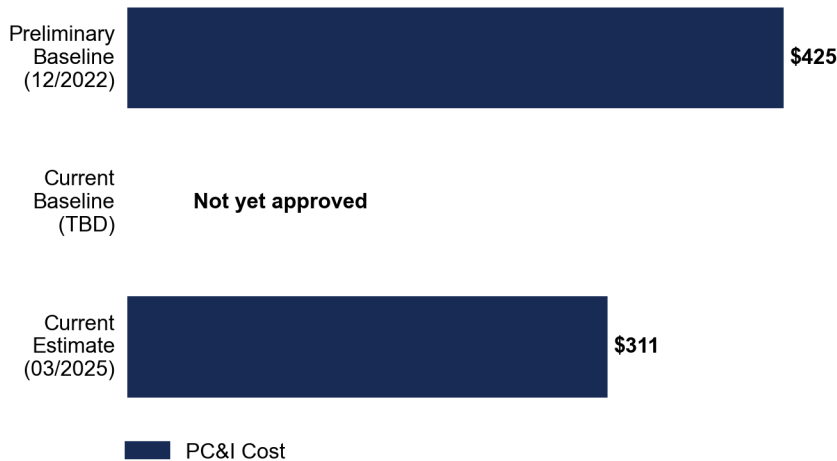
Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Items with No Integration Required

Next major milestone: ADE 2B by March 2026

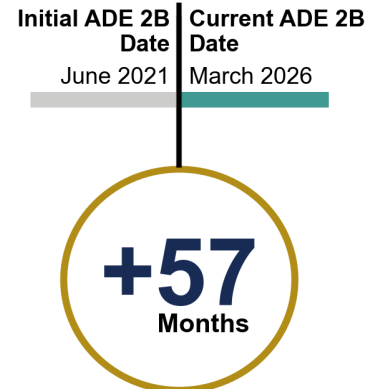
Key Findings

- **Cost and Schedule.** The program achieved IOC for the PSD system in April 2025, 4 months later than planned. The program achieved IOC for MDTT in June 2025, 3 months behind schedule, due to procurement and shipping delays. The program currently plans to achieve ADE 2B for both elements in March 2026.
- **Testing.** All 1-year operational use periods—evaluation periods that support future deployment decisions—for PSD are complete. Testing for MDTT was delayed due to the procurement delays, but is now complete and assessment of the data is being finished. The program expects to meet testing requirements in time to achieve ADE 2B in March 2026.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: New program capabilities were added after the original milestone date was set.

CROSS BORDER TUNNEL THREAT

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

CBP initiated the CBTT program in 2015 after it identified a mission deficiency in its ability to predict, detect, and track subterranean activity or operations. CBP established the preliminary baseline for the PSD effort in December 2019. Then, DHS approved ADE 2A for PSD in April 2020. In August 2022, over 2 years later, program officials updated the program's LCCE to include the MDTT capability. In December 2022, CBP revised the program's preliminary baseline to include the new capability and also to decrease the required mileage to achieve FOC from 99 to 36 miles. The decrease from 99 to 36 miles is based on gathered intelligence and tunnel operation metrics.

Cost and Schedule Status

Since our last assessment, the program achieved IOC for PSD—the deployment of PSD along 6 miles of the highest priority sectors of the southwest border—in April 2025, 4 months later than planned. Program officials reported that the program met this milestone in November 2024, but due to changes with the processes for routing and reviewing memorandums, the program did not officially achieve PSD IOC until April 2025. Similarly, IOC for MDTT (two toolkits) was delayed by 3 months due to procurement and shipping delays, according to program officials. However, officials told us CBP was able to procure all of the needed components to test MDTT and declared IOC for MDTT in June 2025.

The program plans to achieve ADE 2B for both PSD and MDTT in March 2026 and establish an official baseline. ADE 2B was delayed because the lapse in appropriations delayed approving official actions. To achieve ADE 2B, the program is updating several of its key acquisition documents including the acquisition program baseline, integrated master schedule, and risk register.

Between January 2023 and November 2024, the program did not formally update its cost estimate. According to the 2024 cost estimate, from fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2024, program costs decreased by 1 percent. However, officials noted that they updated the 2025 estimate for ADE 2B and it shows a significant cost increase. This increase is due to accelerating the deployment of PSD and the associated increased cost of staffing, logistics and maintenance, and unit costs.

Performance and Testing

Since our last assessment, the program completed all operational use periods for PSD. Program officials said that they are using the performance data obtained during these use periods to choose vendor(s) for the production contract for the remaining 30 miles of PSD. According to officials, this contract was awarded in January 2026. In addition, officials reported that the operational use periods demonstrated that the systems are capable of meeting key performance parameters. Additional testing of the key performance parameters will take place during IOT&E after ADE 2B, according to program officials.

Additionally, officials said IOT&E will be conducted on newly installed segments starting in late fiscal year 2026.

As previously mentioned, the program experienced delays in receiving MDTT components, which delayed testing. Testing involves a user evaluation during which end users of the MDTT technology can provide feedback on whether the technology is viable for its specified use. Testing for MDTT is now complete and assessment of the data is being finished. The program expects to meet all testing requirements prior to ADE 2B.

In regard to cybersecurity, officials stated that they continue to collaborate with stakeholders to comply with cybersecurity policies. The Office of Information and Technology completed the mission threat assessment for the program, and a secondary cybersecurity tabletop exercise occurred on May 5, 2025. Additional testing is scheduled to be conducted in February 2026 and April 2026.

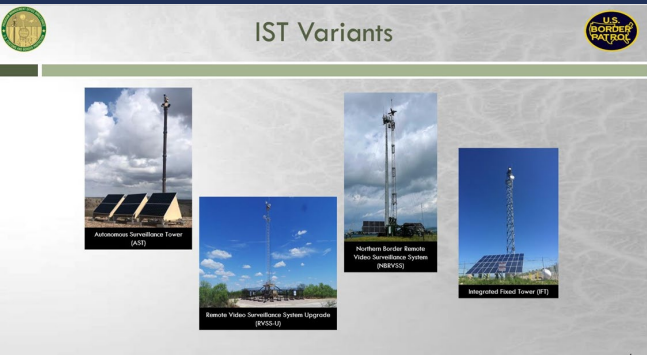
Program Management

A top risk for the program is inconsistent funding available to achieve FOC. Program officials stated that CBTT has historically been underfunded. However, they reported receiving \$250 million in OBBBA funding which officials said reduce the procurement funding issue.

In addition to funding challenges, program officials stated that the program has staffing challenges, including a critical vacancy for a Deputy Program Manager. They do not expect to fill this position before ADE 2B. However, officials noted that they do not think the Deputy Program Manager vacancy has resulted in delays reaching ADE 2B.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Integrated Surveillance Towers

The IST program consists of 803 fielded towers located along U.S. borders that detect items of interest, such as people or vehicles. The program includes towers from four legacy systems: (1) Autonomous Surveillance Towers (AST), (2) Integrated Fixed Towers (IFT), (3) Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS), and (4) Northern Border RVSS. IST will continue to procure, deploy, and maintain systems approved under the legacy programs. The new program will approve additional deployments. To ensure U.S. Border Patrol's command and control centers can access data, IST will integrate with the former Common Operating Picture (COP) program, which officials now refer to as the Operational Picture for Intelligence and Control.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Mixed (IT/Non-IT)

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 3 out of 3 met for legacy towers; testing for future IST deployments has not begun.

Prime contractors: Anduril Industries, for the ASTs; 3 vendors will compete for future delivery orders of autonomous surveillance systems

Contracting approach: IST awarded indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contracts in September 2023 to three vendors for hardware, plus a contract with Anduril Industries in 2020.

Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Item with Integration

Next major milestone: DHS approval of APB by January 2026

Key Findings

- **Cost and schedule.** IST has been executing program activities without an APB since its establishment in 2022. CBP officials said the APB is planned for approval by January 2026. CBP officials said the APB is delayed in part because DHS is working to incorporate COP into the APB. IST's FOC quantity is planned to increase from its notional 350 to approximately 2,300 towers through purchases of long-range autonomous towers and recapitalization of existing towers with autonomous functions.
- **Performance.** CBP officials said the operational availability of existing IFT and RVSS towers has improved due to greater availability of spare parts and the addition of autonomous infrastructure.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months

Initial Baseline (TBD) **Not yet approved**

Current Baseline (TBD) **Not yet approved**

Current Estimate (01/2023) **\$1,368**

■ PC&I Cost

Note: Program does not yet have an approved baseline with future milestone dates.

INTEGRATED SURVEILLANCE TOWERS

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

In March 2022, DHS consolidated four legacy tower systems and established IST as the consolidated program of record. As such, IST currently has 830 fielded towers and plans to deliver another 175. In August 2024, DHS approved CBP's request to purchase up to 42 additional ASTs—as part of future deliveries—with \$34 million in fiscal year 2024 funding. DHS previously approved CBP's request to purchase up to 133 additional towers, in total, between 2022 and 2023. IST already achieved ADE 3 because since 2021, CBP deployed all previously approved towers. The program plans to achieve FOC in March 2034, at which point it expects to have deployed 2,300 towers that meet all the KPPs.

Cost and Schedule Status

IST has not had a DHS-approved APB since its establishment in 2022. CBP officials told us they believed IST's APB would be approved by January 2026. In July 2025, CBP officials told us that DHS is determining whether COP will operate as a project within IST. This decision has contributed to delays in DHS' approval of the APB because the program would need to incorporate the COP capability into the program's cost and schedule goals.

CBP officials said they have been unable to establish the program's APB in the past 3 years because of fluctuations in funding and directed procurement of ASTs, which drove cost and schedule changes. To simplify approval of IST's APB, CBP officials proposed removing the affordability analysis and the annual baselining activity. Instead, the program would base the APB on the total FOC quantity and projected date, and adjust the tower count, type and deployment options based on mission need and IST's funding. CBP officials said this approach would allow flexibility to adjust plans within its operations and annual budget. The program's LCCE and schedule would still be monitored to ensure they stayed within APB threshold levels. CBP officials said all IST deployments are fully funded through fiscal year 2028 at current planned funding levels, however, the program needs additional O&S funding than currently planned in order to maintain those deployments.

IST plans to move towards its towers having fully autonomous capabilities. According to CBP officials, IST expects to receive approximately \$1 billion of OBBBA funding which will allow them to deploy new towers and upgrade existing towers with these capabilities. Program officials said IST's FOC quantity will increase from the notional 350 to approximately 2,300 towers that require autonomy. According to officials, in addition to the 803 fielded towers, 1,497 new towers will be long-range autonomous towers deployed in coastal and maritime domains partly in response to executive order 14165 for border security.

Performance and Testing

CBP officials told us the operational availability of IFT and RVSS towers has improved since February 2025 due to

availability of spare parts and updating these towers to add autonomous capabilities through new radars, cameras, and power infrastructure.

CBP officials told us that some ASTs were using lattice software, to synthesize data from disparate and distributed systems, at multiple areas of responsibility. They were optimistic that this would be a viable solution for towers in the absence of full COP capability until DHS makes a decision about COP's program status.

IST's November 2021 operational requirements document identifies three KPPs for detection, availability, and data transmission. IST will not acquire new capabilities beyond those in existing tower configurations.

Program Management

CBP officials said they anticipate hiring more federal and contractor staff in logistics, engineering, and project management, especially if IST integrates the COP capability. They cited challenges with hiring a deputy program manager because of the federal hiring freeze and the need for this position to be an internal CBP/DHS hire. These officials said they are mitigating this challenge by actively recruiting for this position.

Program Office Comments

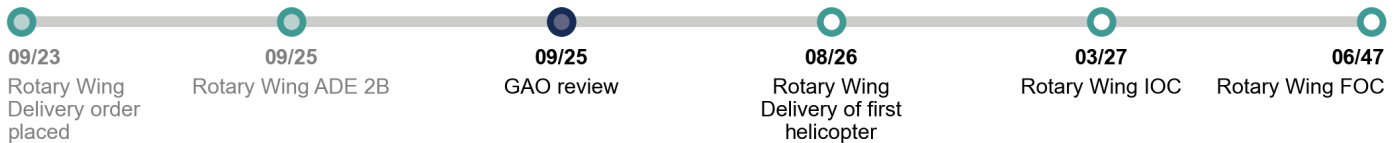
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate. DHS officials stated that COP is now referred to as the Operational Picture for Tactical Intelligence and Control (OPTIC) and is a project under IST.



Light Enforcement Platform

The LEP program plans to provide CBP’s Air and Marine Operations with additional light enforcement aircraft to include rotary wing, fixed wing, and uncrewed capabilities. This office currently has a mixed fleet of approximately 120 single-engine crewed aircraft that help conduct airborne surveillance and transportation activities along the northern and southern U.S. borders. The LEP program plans to address surveillance coverage gaps along the southwest and northern borders. In addition, LEP expects to deliver critical sensors, interoperability, and cybersecurity capabilities to augment the existing light rotary winged fleet. LEP is procuring helicopters and gradually replacing the aging light enforcement helicopter fleet.

Source: AMO. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: KPPs not yet tested.

Prime contractor: Davenport Aviation, Inc.

Contracting approach: The program is currently acquiring standardized commercial off-the-shelf Airbus H125 helicopters that are configured and delivered with supporting equipment from the GSA federal supply schedule.

Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Item with Integration

Next major milestone: Delivery of first rotary wing helicopter by August 2026

Key Findings

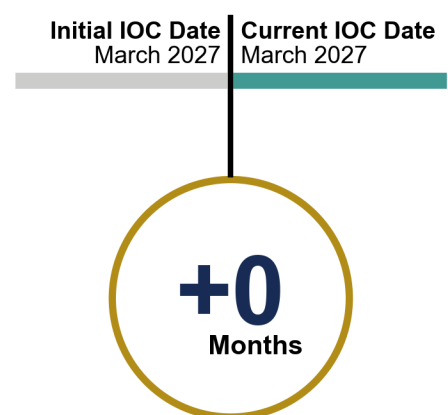
- Cost and Schedule.** The program established a baseline and achieved ADE 2B in September 2025. Officials reported delivery of the first helicopter is again delayed until the current August 2026 delivery, primarily due to a combination of a faulty part found during assembly and delays to the contractor’s aircraft certification documentation to the FAA. According to officials, the program ordered helicopters 2-6 and deliveries are expected by the end of fiscal year 2027.
- Program Management.** After the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) indicated it might remove certain aircraft from the federal supply schedule, CBP and GSA coordinated a plan for the program to award its next LEP rotary wing delivery order under the original GSA federal supply schedule contract by the end of fiscal year 2026.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



Note: While the LEP program has an approved baseline, according to program officials those baseline figures are procurement sensitive.

SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



LIGHT ENFORCEMENT PLATFORM

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The LEP helicopter is the first of three platforms in the overall LEP program. CBP's Air and Marine Operations has a current fleet of approximately 120 light enforcement helicopters and fixed winged light enforcement aircraft. They have a requirement for 58 H125 helicopters, which will replace the current fleet of AS350 helicopters. The new H125 LEP helicopters are updated versions of the AS350. In 2023, DHS approved the purchase of all the LEP rotary wing H125 helicopters to add to CBP's current fleet of 26 H125 helicopters. This equates to 84 helicopters required to achieve FOC.

Cost and Schedule Status

The program established a baseline and achieved ADE 2B in September 2025. Since last year's assessment, the program now expects delivery of the first helicopter by the end of August 2026, according to officials. Last year, officials reported a 6-month delay for the first two helicopters due to activities related to Federal Aviation Administration certification processes. This year, officials explained that while they still anticipate delays for the first helicopter, primarily due to the Federal Aviation Administration certification process, they are now projecting an additional delay due to a faulty component found in the tail rotor gearbox. During assembly, the contractor noticed vibration in the gearbox, which controls the tail rotor direction, and replaced an existing part with a new one from the manufacturer, incurring no additional cost.

In August 2024, the program placed orders for helicopters 2-4, and in September 2025, it ordered aircraft 5 and 6, according to officials. The cost per unit for aircraft 2-4 is approximately \$1.5 million less than the first prototype helicopter, while the cost per unit for aircraft 5 and 6 is approximately \$860,000 less than the first prototype helicopter. Officials attributed this decrease to not needing to pay additional engineering costs to obtain the supplemental Federal Aviation Administration certification on subsequent helicopters, reduced annual cost escalation, and by non-recurring engineering costs. The program expects delivery of helicopters 2-4 no later than the third quarter of 2027 and delivery of helicopters 5 and 6 no later than the fourth quarter of 2027.

Program officials reported they anticipate receiving OBBBA funds. In addition, for the program's anticipated contract award in fiscal year 2026, officials said they would be able to order up to 10 aircraft using OBBBA funds, which will remain available until the end of fiscal year 2029. Officials added this will accelerate the program's original ordering schedule as it anticipated ordering only up to five aircraft per year.

Performance and Testing

Officials told us they conducted a cyber tabletop exercise in February 2025 and determined the risks identified were low impact. The potential malicious actors found were similar to those found on previous versions of the

helicopter. Officials added they accepted the risks prior to any design changes. Additionally, officials told us the cyber tabletop results will scope further operational cyber resilience testing that will be scheduled in 2026.

The program conducted design reviews in fiscal year 2024. During the second design review, officials decided to upgrade the helicopter's current sensor to the manufacturer's next generation electro-optic sensor as it was more cost efficient compared to updating the current sensor. Officials explained the upgraded sensor will be an improved, next generation model with new capabilities such as split-screen viewing.

According to officials, they plan to conduct acceptance and KPP testing after delivery of the first helicopter and IOT&E will be conducted in 2026.

Program Management

In early 2025, GSA indicated its intent to remove pre-negotiated, fully assembled rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft from its federal supply schedule. Officials told us prior to this change, ordering from the federal supply schedule allowed for a more streamlined award process. In January 2026, program officials stated that in early fiscal year 2026, GSA postponed its previous plan to remove the H125 aircraft from the federal supply schedule. Officials explained that CBP and GSA coordinated a plan for the program to award its next LEP rotary wing delivery order under the original GSA federal supply schedule contract by the end of fiscal year 2026.

Officials also told us they do not have a full-time deputy program manager and currently, a program manager from another aviation program is serving as LEP's part-time deputy program manager.

Program Office Comments

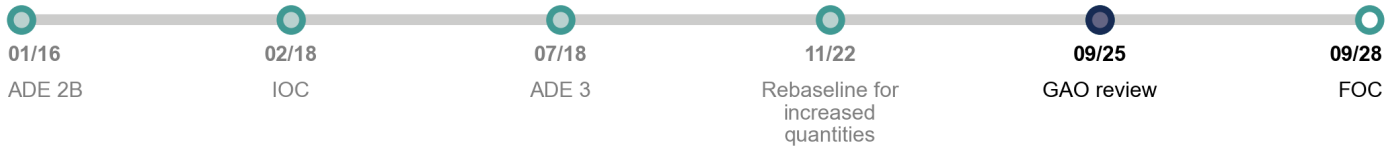
We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.



Medium Lift Helicopter

CBP uses MLH for law enforcement and border security operations; air and mobility support and transport; search and rescue; and other missions. The MLH program acquired existing helicopters from the U.S. Army and will convert HH-60Ls to UH-60Ls, provide logistical sustainment support for the entire fleet, and store the aircraft. The conversion involves two steps: (1) deconfiguring all military equipment, and (2) reconfiguring aircraft with CBP-unique equipment, instruments, and sensors. The current MLH fleet consists of 35 total aircraft acquired in three different models: 16 UH-60A, four UH-60M, and 15 HH-60L. This assessment will cover both the deconfiguration and reconfiguration of aircraft.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: 5 of 5 KPPs met.

Servicing agency: U.S. Army Utility Helicopter Project Office, which contracts with selected vendors.

Contracting approach: The program has an interagency agreement with fixed prices with the Army for aircraft acquisition, modification, and support activities. Officials reported that all contract awards made by the Army are cost-plus-fixed-fee.

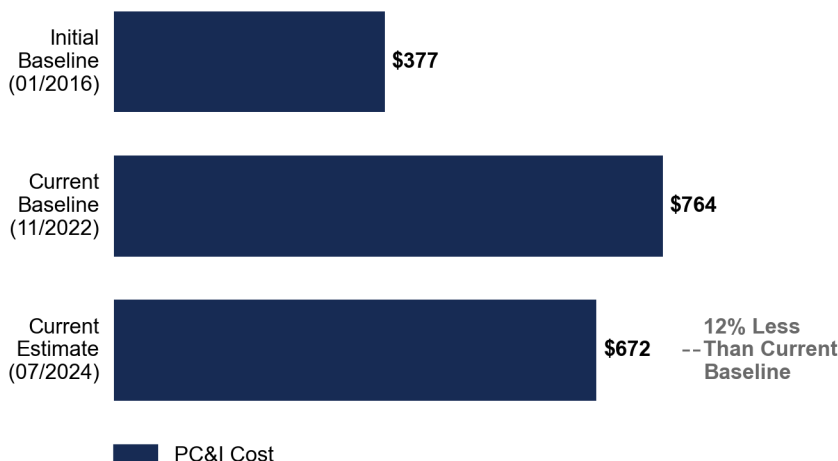
Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf and Government Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Item with Integration

Next major milestone: FOC by September 2028

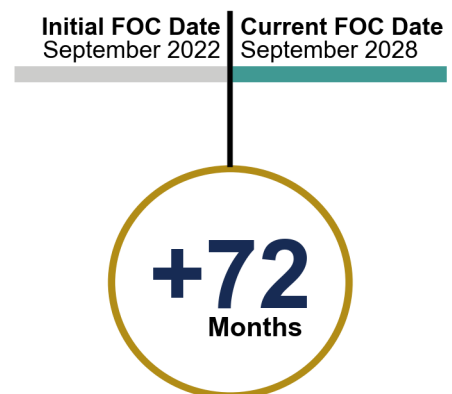
Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** The program did not initially receive funding in fiscal year 2025, but is now receiving \$18.5 million in PC&I funds. Officials told us they received aircraft 10 in 2025, but the next two aircraft, previously expected in fiscal year 2024, are delayed to at least fiscal year 2027. Officials said that this is reportedly due to a lack of funding in fiscal year 2024, a delay in funding in fiscal year 2025, and additional repairs needed for the remaining five aircraft.
- Program Management.** The program is considering pursuing a new acquisition strategy to replace its aging fleet, which CBP will begin retiring in fiscal year 2026. Part of this strategy is to obtain phased out Army UH-60Ls. Officials said the program is fully staffed and reported it has not been affected by recent executive orders.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



Note: Program rebaselined to increase quantities and extend FOC.

MEDIUM LIFT HELICOPTER

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The MLH program established its initial baseline in 2016 and has rebaselined twice, most recently in 2022 to extend FOC from 2022 to 2028, in part due to an increase in FOC quantities. As part of the 2022 rebaseline, DHS approved an increase in FOC quantities from 20 to 35 aircraft and baseline acquisition costs from \$377 million to \$764 million. CBP acquired four modern UH-60M aircraft and converted six of its 16 older UH-60A aircraft into the more capable UH-60L models. It is also acquiring 15 reconfigured Army HH-60L aircraft—to be converted to UH-60L models as part of its current acquisition strategy—and pursuing a new acquisition strategy to replace its 10 older UH-60A aircraft. In August 2023, the MLH program entered into a new interagency agreement with the Army with a period of performance through August 2028.

Cost and Schedule Status

Program officials stated that the program did not initially receive funding in fiscal year 2025, but the Air and Marine Operations office prioritized the program in a spend plan submitted for congressional approval. As a result, the program reported receiving \$18.5 million in PC&I funds in fiscal year 2025, as compared to fiscal year 2024, when the program did not receive funding. Officials expect to receive the funds by the end of September 2025. Officials told us they also expect to receive funds as part of the OBBBA and plan to use it to fund the remaining five aircraft needed to achieve FOC.

Officials reported that they accepted aircraft 10 in June 2025. Delivery of aircraft 11 and 12 are expected in fiscal year 2027. Specifically, the program expects aircraft 11 to be delivered by March 2027, an approximately 3-year delay from its original delivery date, and aircraft 12 to be delivered by September 2027, a 2-year delay from its original delivery date. Officials added that the \$18.5 million in PC&I funds will help maintain the delivery schedule for aircraft 11 through 15.

Officials shared that the remaining aircraft used for the conversions are more degraded than originally known, contributing to the delays. While they were aware of the degradation of many of the Army aircraft, they did not know the full extent to which the airframes would need repairs. Specifically, officials said some of the degradation included aircraft with corrosion and poor-quality sheet metal repairs in need of replacement. Officials added this is primarily impacting the remaining aircraft.

Performance and Program Management

The program met all five of its KPPs in February 2018 and does not have any future testing planned at this time.

Officials told us they are pursuing a new acquisition strategy to replace the aging UH-60A fleet that will begin retirement in fiscal year 2026. While the strategy has not yet been formalized, the program plans to rebaseline sometime in fiscal year 2026 with the goal of converting 20 additional aircraft to CBP specifications. Officials added because of the age and high flight hours of the

older aircraft, they will not pursue a service life extension and will instead replace them on a 1-for-1 basis. Officials added that now that the Army has selected a Black Hawk replacement, part of the program's new potential strategy is to explore options to obtain phased out Army UH-60s.

Officials stated that the program was not negatively affected by the hiring freeze as they hired all positions prior to the freeze. Additionally, the program reported that recent executive orders have not changed or affected prioritization of program acquisition tasks or program responsibilities.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.

Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft



MEA are fixed-wing, multi-engine aircraft that can be configured to perform multiple missions. Each MEA is equipped with a search radar and an electro-optical/infrared sensor to support maritime surveillance and airborne and land tracking missions. CBP intends to use MEA to replace its aging fleet of C-12, PA-42, and BE-20 aircraft. CBP is acquiring MEA in four different configurations: (1) maritime interdiction, (2) air interdiction, (3) land interdiction, and (4) technical collections. Each has its own acquisition milestones, but they share a program cost baseline. Our assessment includes information on all four configurations but focuses primarily on the land interdiction configuration.

Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Non-IT

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: maritime interdiction: 5 of 5 met; air interdiction: 2 of 2 met; land interdiction: Testing of 4 KPPs has not begun.

Prime contractor: Science and Engineering Services

Contracting approach: The program awarded an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract for production of the Land Interdiction aircraft in September 2022.

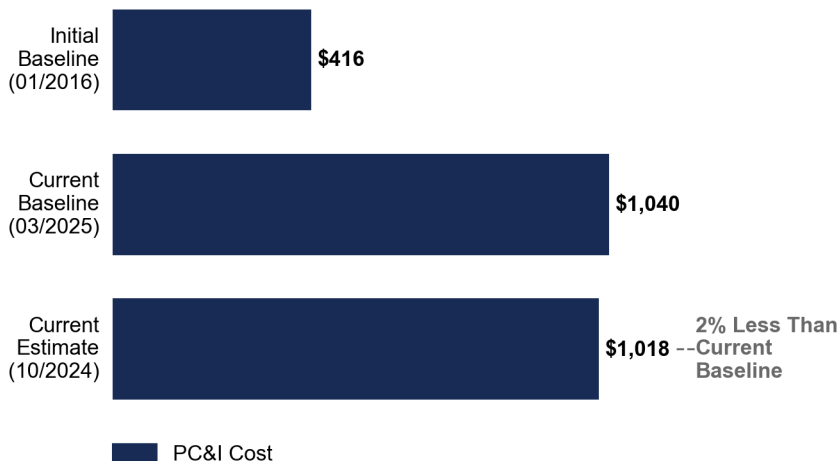
Life-cycle path: Commercial Off-the-Shelf/Non-Developmental Item with Integration

Next major milestone: IOC (land interdiction) by December 2026

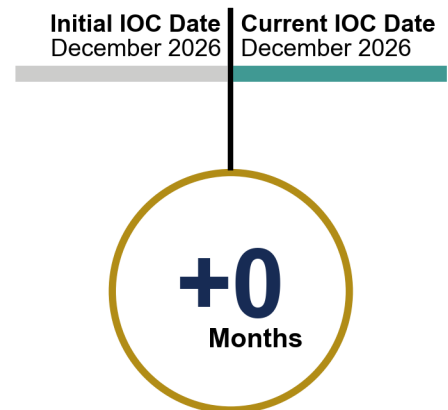
Key Findings

- Cost and Schedule.** The program achieved ADE 2B for the land interdiction configuration in March 2025 but anticipates future milestones will be delayed. The program expects IOC to be delayed by 9 months for various reasons. The program established its baseline for the land interdiction configuration with procurement costs more than 3.5 percent lower than previously estimated.
- Program Management.** The program continues to experience staffing constraints. While CBP was able to hire a program manager last year, the hiring freeze has prevented the hiring of a deputy program manager.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



MULTI-ROLE ENFORCEMENT AIRCRAFT

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The MEA program started as part of CBP's Strategic Air and Marine Plan fleet modernization program in 2008 and was separated to become its own program in 2016. At that time, an initial program baseline for the maritime interdiction configuration was approved. The program subsequently rebaselined twice to incorporate two follow-on configurations—the air and land interdiction aircraft. MEA is currently comprised of three configurations totaling 35 aircraft: maritime interdiction (16), air interdiction (13), and land interdiction (6). Both the maritime and air interdiction configurations have achieved FOC. A technical collections configuration is planned to follow the land interdiction configuration once related requirements documentation is complete. CBP officials expect that to happen by the end of fiscal year 2029. Program officials confirmed that delivery orders for the first two land interdiction aircraft were placed in fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The total contract period of performance for this configuration is from September 2022 through September 2027, which consists of a base ordering period and four 1-year ordering periods.

Cost and Schedule Status

In March 2025, the program achieved ADE 2B and established a baseline for the land interdiction configuration that reflected updated cost data. Acquisition costs are expected to be more than 3.5 percent lower than what previous LCCEs projected—that is, from approximately \$1.06 billion to \$1.02 billion in fiscal year 2024 dollars. According to the program's 2025 LCCE, the lower estimate is attributable to lower costs in nonrecurring production, support equipment, and system test and evaluation. Officials noted that the projected cost reduction in test and evaluation is due to the building on the testing results from the previous air interdiction configuration as both configurations share common secondary missions in air mobility and logistics.

Officials told us they received OBBBA funds and ordered aircraft 4 and 5 at the end of September 2025.

IOC slipped 9 months due in part to a 1-month subcontractor labor strike that delayed delivery of the first two aircraft. Those aircraft are required for the program to achieve IOC. Officials said they now expect delivery of the aircraft in December 2025 and June 2026, respectively. In addition to the labor strike, officials told us that the manufacturer also has a contract with the Navy to produce 60 aircraft. Officials stated the Navy's contract has a priority rating, which requires that contract to be prioritized over others to support national defense. This has caused production delays for the third MEA land interdiction aircraft. Officials advised that while the Navy was willing to work with the MEA program and share the assembly line, the manufacturer was unable to facilitate that request because the assembly line could only accommodate one type of engine at a time. As the Navy continues to take delivery of its aircraft, more spots will open for MEA production and officials expect the problem to be resolved for future orders.

Performance and Testing

Officials told us the program held a Cyber Threat Assessment for the land interdiction configuration in

December 2024. In the past, the program conducted this same assessment on other configurations and officials reported no significant risks were raised with the land interdiction configuration.

Furthermore, officials told us a cyber tabletop exercise was conducted in August 2025. The results of that event will scope additional operational cyber resilience testing that will be scheduled in 2026.

Officials also said that the program will conduct an operational assessment for the land interdiction configuration when they receive the first aircraft in December 2025. Once that aircraft is delivered, the program will conduct KPP testing during IOT&E.

Program Management

Officials told us the hiring freeze is delaying milestone events. They noted that they do not have a deputy program manager and having one would have helped with the recent ADE 2B event. Officials previously explained that staffing challenges required contractor support staff to help draft the required acquisition documents to achieve ADE 2B. The program plans to hire a deputy program manager once the hiring freeze is lifted.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.

Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration

NII Integration aims to connect and integrate NII scanning units with automation tools to increase scanning volume and detection effectiveness. CBP uses large- and small-scale scanning units at land, sea, and air ports of entry. These scanning units examine containers, railcars, passengers, and other items to prohibit potential threats or contraband from entering the U.S. The legacy NII system architecture operates as a stand-alone scanning capability limited to low-volume and targeted scanning. This assessment does not include the NII Systems program.



Source: CBP. | GAO-26-108118



Program Information

Component: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Acquisition Type: Mixed (IT/Non-IT)

Acquisition Level: 1

Key Performance Parameters Status: Testing of the program's four KPPs has not begun.

Prime contractor: S2 Global, Incorporated

Contracting approach: The program awarded a contract in August 2025 for capabilities to support its integration efforts.

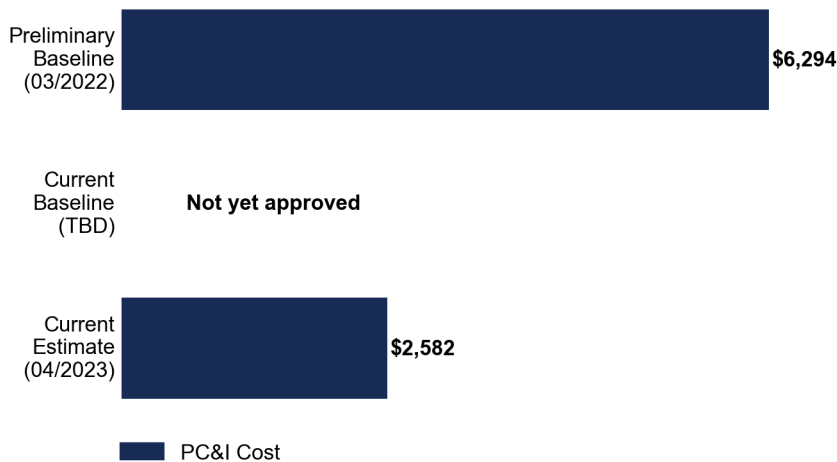
Life-cycle path: Incremental Software Development

Next major milestone: ADE 2B by March 2026

Key Findings

- **Cost and Schedule.** The program is currently updating its LCCE in preparation for setting the official baseline at the ADE 2B event in early 2026. The program anticipates this updated LCCE will categorize it as a level 2 acquisition.
- **Program Management.** Program officials stated that they have refined and streamlined the scope of the program. As part of that process, they removed anomaly detection—an automation tool to help enhance scanning capabilities—from the program scope due to technology maturity concerns. However, officials noted that they are still tracking this technology for possible future inclusion.

BASELINE AND CURRENT COST ESTIMATES dollars in millions



SELECTED MILESTONE DELAY in months



NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION INTEGRATION

Program History and Acquisition Strategy

The NII Integration program supports CBP's mission to safeguard U.S. borders from threats while facilitating legitimate international travel. The program began in December 2019 as an addition to the NII Systems program, which was initiated in the 1990s and is estimated to cost over \$1.6 billion in then-year dollars. The NII Systems program is a separate program that operates stand-alone scanning systems that do not integrate with broader CBP networks. These two programs remain closely intertwined, but program officials stated they are working to separate program information so each program can be managed individually. According to officials, updates to the programs' scopes have the NII Systems program focused on hardware and the NII Integration program focused solely on software.

Cost and Schedule Status

NII Integration does not have its own funding profile and instead uses funding budgeted for the NII Systems program. Officials stated that this is not a challenge for the program and they do not have concerns about the shared funding profile, as the OBBBA provided the program with the funding it needs. According to officials, the program received a portion of the approximately \$1 billion allotted for the NII program through the OBBBA which will allow them to procure new systems, and support integration of data, among other things.

Program officials explained that they anticipate completing an LCCE by the end of calendar year 2025 in preparation for the ADE 2B event at which they will set the official program baseline. Based on their preliminary estimates, they expect the LCCE to categorize the program as a level 2 acquisition.

The program is in the process of updating many of its acquisition documents in preparation for its ADE 2B event. According to officials, this event is currently planned for March 2026, approximately 12 months earlier than we reported last year, but later than initially planned. Program officials shared that they were able to move this milestone earlier due to refining and streamlining program requirements.

Performance and Testing

Program officials stated that they are refining the program's KPPs to better align with the new streamlined approach. The new consolidated operational requirements document, once complete, will outline the new KPPs. This document will replace the concept of operations and the operational requirements document.

According to program officials, they currently have an independent test team helping to develop the test strategy. They are planning to hold limited operational testing, such as user acceptance testing to verify the maturity of user functionality, prior to the ADE 2B milestone.

Program Management

Program officials stated that they, in conjunction with component officials, determined that the artificial intelligence technology used to support anomaly detection was not mature enough to serve the needs of the program at this time. As a result, they decided to refine requirements and remove anomaly detection capabilities from the program scope prior to baselining the program. The program will now focus on delivering a commercially available off-the-shelf software solution that uses proven technologies. This approach aligns with our previous findings that leading companies only embark on product development once they assess and establish confidence that the underlying technologies in the product are sufficiently mature to meet user needs and support the product development schedule.

Program officials shared that artificial intelligence solutions are not completely off the table. Currently, officials consider this technology to be in a demonstration status and they plan to continue tracking it as it matures. Those officials explained that they know how the technology will fit into the rest of the program, once it is mature.

The program is working to develop an integrated IT platform that leverages existing Office of Information and Technology systems, applications, and cloud architecture. They will then integrate the Common Integration Platform capability, the Common Viewer, and the Office of Information and Technology's Announcement Queue and Results Integration Platform into a single solution that the program can deploy to ports of entry.

According to officials, workforce challenges continue to be an issue. They shared that this is not a new challenge for the program, but has been further exacerbated by the hiring freeze. They additionally explained that OBBBA funding will be helpful, but there is still only so much work the program can take on with limited staff.

Program Office Comments

We provided a draft of this assessment to the program office for review and comment. The program office provided technical comments, which we incorporated where appropriate.

Appendix II: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this audit were designed to provide congressional committees insight into the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) major acquisition programs. We assessed the extent to which selected DHS major acquisition programs are meeting their baseline cost, schedule, and performance goals. We also assessed the status of DHS's acquisition portfolio, including any cost and schedule risks.

To address these objectives, we selected 27 of DHS's 36 major acquisition programs.¹ We selected 18 of DHS's level 1 acquisition programs—those with life-cycle cost estimates of \$1 billion or more—that had at least one project, increment, or segment in the obtain phase—the stage in the acquisition life cycle when programs develop, test, and evaluate systems—at the initiation of our audit in January 2025. All 18 programs had at least one segment in the process of obtaining new capabilities at the initiation of this audit. Additionally, we reviewed nine other level 1 or level 2 major acquisition programs that we identified for a variety of reasons including risk of not meeting their cost estimates, schedules, or capability requirements, based on our past work. We excluded the remaining nine major acquisition programs for a variety of reasons, including because some were lower risk programs already in deployment.

We met with representatives from DHS's Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management—DHS's main body for acquisition oversight at the start of our review—as a part of our scoping effort to determine which programs, if any, were facing difficulties in meeting their cost, schedules, or capability goals. The 27 selected programs were sponsored by six different components, and they are identified in table 7, along with our rationale for selecting them.

¹Our review included 23 of the 24 programs that we reviewed in GAO, *DHS Annual Assessment: Improved Guidance on Revised Acquisition Goals Would Enhance Transparency*, [GAO-25-107317](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 25, 2025).

Appendix II: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Table 7: Rationale for Selecting DHS Major Acquisition Programs for Review

Component	Program	Level 1 program in the Obtain phase at the initiation of GAO's review	Level 1 or level 2 program identified to be at risk^a
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency	Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation	X	—
	Cyber Analytic and Data System	X	—
	CyberSentry	—	X
	Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 1	—	X
	Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 2	—	X
DHS Management Directorate	Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology	X	—
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Enterprise Data and Analytics Modernization Initiative	—	X
	Integrated Public Alert and Warning System	—	X
Transportation Security Administration	Checkpoint Property Screening System	X	—
	Credential Authentication Technology	—	X
U.S. Coast Guard	Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker	—	X
	Long Range Surveillance Aircraft	X	—
	Medium Range Recovery Helicopter (MH-60T)	X	—
	Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft	X	—
	National Security Cutter	X	—
	Offshore Patrol Cutter	X	—
	Polar Security Cutter	X	—

Appendix II: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

	Waterways Commerce Cutter	X	—
U.S. Customs and Border Protection	Automated Commercial Environment	X	—
	Biometric Entry-Exit	X	—
	Common Operating Picture	—	X
	Cross Border Tunnel Threat	X	—
	Integrated Surveillance Towers	—	X
	Light Enforcement Platform	X	—
	Medium Lift Helicopter	—	X
	Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft	X	—
	Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration	X	—

Legend: X = applicable rationale ; — = not applicable

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) data. | GAO-26-108118

^aPrograms with Xs in this column are either Level 2 programs in the obtain phase or Level 1 and Level 2 programs that we identified as at risk of not meeting their cost estimates, schedules, or capability requirements based on our past work.

To determine the extent to which DHS’s major acquisition programs are meeting their cost, schedule, and performance goals, we collected key acquisition documentation for each of the 27 programs, including life-cycle cost estimates and acquisition program baselines (APB) approved at the department level since November 2008 when DHS’s acquisition management policy went into effect. The version of DHS’s acquisition management policy in effect at the time of our review established that all major acquisition programs should have a department-approved APB—which establishes a program’s critical cost, schedule, and performance parameters—at acquisition decision event 2B. Nineteen of the 27 programs had one or more department-approved life-cycle cost estimates and APBs between November 2008 and our cut-off date of September 30, 2025.² We excluded the eight programs without department-approved

²The remaining eight programs—Commercially Available Polar Icebreaker, Common Operating Picture, Cross Border Tunnel Threat, Cyber Analytic and Data System, CyberSentry, Integrated Surveillance Towers, Next Generation Network Priority Services Phase 2, and Non-Intrusive Inspection Integration—did not receive department approval of their initial APBs by September 30, 2025. Therefore, we excluded them from our assessment of whether programs are on track to meet their schedule and cost goals during fiscal year 2025.

APBs from our aggregated analyses reviewing the extent that programs are meeting their cost, schedule, and performance goals. Ultimately, we included 19 of the 27 programs in our portfolio analysis of programs meeting goals.

We used APBs to identify the initial and current cost and schedule goals for the programs. For APB cost information, we adjusted the values to fiscal year 2024 dollars using the GDP Price Index. For the purposes of this review, we generally used the date that DHS leadership signed the relevant acquisition decision memorandum to signify the date of an event, including acquisition decision events. We used a questionnaire to collect standardized information about cost, schedule, and performance activities.

To determine how many programs did not meet or adjusted their APBs, we reviewed breach, rebaseline, and APB adjustment memorandums, and conducted interviews. We reviewed additional program documentation to confirm that these programs received approval to adjust their APBs and to determine the cost and schedule effects of those adjustments. We also met with program officials to identify the causes and effects associated with any identified cost and schedule goal changes.

To determine the extent to which programs were meeting performance goals, we requested information from each individual program and DHS's test and evaluation officials. We used standardized questionnaires given to each acquisition program to obtain information about key performance parameters and whether those parameters were met or changed since our last review. We requested and received information from DHS's test and evaluation officials about programs that had scheduled or completed testing of deployed capabilities, and if those programs had key performance parameters that were generally met.

To determine the status of the DHS acquisition portfolio, including any cost and schedule risks for our selected programs, we reviewed program information and conducted interviews. To determine the total estimated program acquisition costs for the programs in our review, we analyzed life-cycle cost estimate data as of September 2025 and presented this information by component. Programs can develop an estimated life-cycle cost before they have an approved initial or preliminary acquisition program baseline. For the 24 programs with department-approved life cycle cost estimates, we identified whether the program had updated their estimated costs since fiscal year 2024, and calculated the change

between the 2024 and 2025 estimates. The programs in our scope excluded from this part of our analysis lack an approved estimate. To determine the staffing status, and any potential related schedule risks, we interviewed program officials and analyzed programs written responses to a standard set of questions about workforce levels.

While all cost data presented are as of September 2025, schedule data shown has been reviewed by DHS as of January 2026. Similarly, in instances where significant updates occurred after September 2025, we included that information and indicated the relevant date.

To determine the program schedule milestones met and expected for next year, we reviewed program documentation such as APBs and acquisition decision memorandums, information from a standardized questionnaire given to each acquisition program, and interviews with program and component officials. To determine upcoming schedule and cost risks we reviewed information provided by program and component officials during interviews, as well as program and external documentation such as Congressional Budget Office estimates.

To understand the impact of increased funding from Public Law 119-21—also known as the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act—we reviewed the legislation and asked standard written questions for all programs in our scope. We analyzed that information to describe how much additional funding programs anticipate receiving, and what they plan to spend those funds on. We also provide an update on two programs, the Border Wall System Program and the Arctic Security Cutter, that received significant funds in the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act but were not included in our scope of 27 programs.

Subsequently, we drafted preliminary assessments for each program. When drafting these assessments, we used either a one- or two-page format based on the program's status. We used a one-page assessment format for some programs based on several factors, including whether the programs were pre-ADE 2A, were late in the production and support phase but had not yet hit FOC, or were part of the DHS rapid acquisition pathway. After drafting the assessments, we shared them with program and component officials and gave those officials an opportunity to submit comments to help us correct any inaccurate or outdated information, or clarify, as appropriate.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2025 to June 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.³ Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

³From October 1 through November 12, 2025, January 31 through February 3, 2026, and February 14 through April 30, 2026, DHS was subject to a lapse in appropriations. We sent the draft report to DHS for comment on February 26, 2026 and received comments from DHS on May 13, 2026.

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Travis J. Masters at masterst@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact listed above, Claire Li (Assistant Director), Ryan Braun (Portfolio Analysis Analyst-in-Charge), Shelby Clark (Program Assessments Analyst-in-Charge), James Cora, and Daniel Speer made key contributions to this report. Other contributors included Patrick Breiding, Erin Carr, John Crawford, Sadaf Dastan, Aryn Ehlow, Lorraine Ettaro, Marcus Ferguson, Robin Harris, Jessica Karnis, Min-Hei (Michelle) Kim, TyAnn Lee, Brittany Morey, Scott Purdy, Ashley Rawson, William Reed, Christine Stenglein, Anne-Louise Taylor, Sarah Tempel, Ian Toller-Clark, Alyssa Weir, Miranda Wickham, Jacob Wu, and Olivia Yang.

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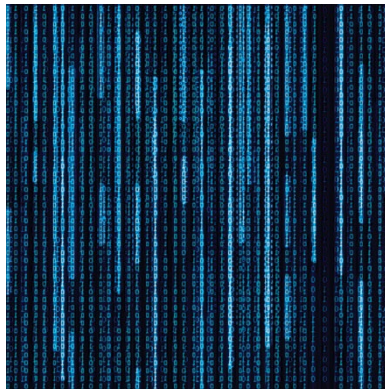


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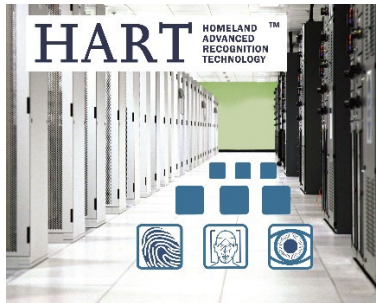


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