

A report to congressional committees

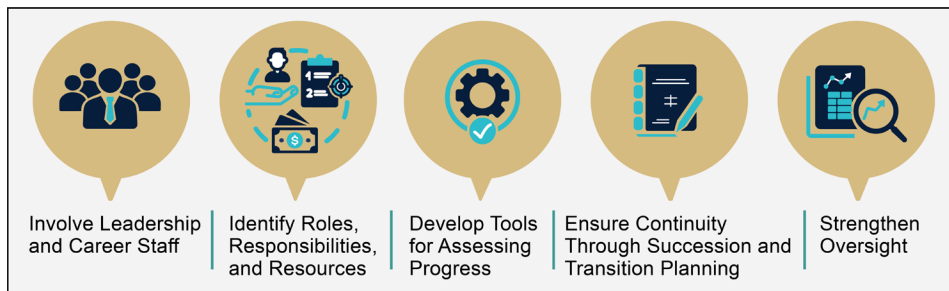
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**What GAO Found**

For decades, GAO has found that the federal government does not sufficiently coordinate or integrate crosscutting activities to improve its performance or address crosscutting management weaknesses. GAO held discussions with participants including former Office of Management and Budget (OMB) political appointees and staff, former cross-agency priority (CAP) goal leaders, and subject-matter specialists in performance management from outside of government. Participants said that CAP goals (4-year outcome-oriented goals) have provided a framework for addressing crosscutting federal performance issues. However, participants in all three groups told GAO that the implementation of CAP goals could be strengthened.

Discussion group participants shared their views on ways to help OMB and agencies more effectively implement CAP goals. These views are summarized as five broad approaches in the figure.

**Figure: Approaches to Improve CAP Goal Implementation Identified by Discussion Groups**



Source: GAO summary of discussion participant statements. | GAO-26-108601

Note: These actions are not listed in any specific rank or order, and their inclusion should not be interpreted as a GAO endorsement. Implementing any one action or a combination of actions could require considerations such as implementation feasibility, resource and legal constraints, and tradeoffs between actions or taking no action at all.

Discussion group participants in all three discussion groups told GAO that the established CAP goal framework often helped to define ownership, created energy around shared priorities, and formed opportunities for agencies to work together. For example, participants shared that customer service CAP goals resonated across multiple administrations and tended to gain momentum over time. However, participants from all three groups also stated that CAP goals' implementation challenges remained, including the use of inconsistent tools for assessing progress; varying levels of leadership engagement; and limited resources, such as staff and funding, to sustain efforts over time.

Discussion group participants suggested actions to help agencies more effectively implement CAP goals. Some of these actions include embedding CAP goal management efforts within federal agencies, capturing and publicly reporting accurate and appropriate data to assess progress, and providing resources to OMB and agencies to accomplish implementation.

Participants also highlighted other opportunities and mechanisms to address crosscutting federal performance challenges. Opportunities included creating a national performance council focused on mission delivery.

**Why GAO Did This Study**

GAO's work continues to identify challenges the federal government faces in effectively managing its activities and addressing crosscutting challenges, such as in GAO's high-risk areas of improving food safety oversight and ensuring cybersecurity.

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) updated the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) to create a more integrated, crosscutting performance planning and reporting framework to support the federal government's achievement of results. It requires OMB to work with federal agencies to establish CAP goals to address crosscutting mission areas as well as management challenges.

GPRAMA includes a provision for GAO to periodically assess the act's implementation, including the CAP goals. This report examines discussion participants' views on the CAP goal framework for addressing crosscutting federal performance challenges, and approaches to more effectively implement CAP goals and other opportunities.

GAO held a series of discussion groups and interviews in May and June 2025. Participants in these discussion groups and interviews represented three previous administrations that had implemented CAP goals. GAO also reviewed requirements related to CAP goals; related OMB A-11 guidance; information about CAP goals on [Performance.gov](http://Performance.gov); and GAO's prior work on CAP goals, GPRAMA implementation, and performance management.