

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027: Serving Congress and the Nation

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), as amended, requires most federal agencies to develop strategic plans. GAO, as a legislative branch agency, is exempt from many federal management laws, including GPRA. However, we generally hold ourselves to the spirit of these laws. As such, we consider this strategic plan to include information comparable to what is required by GPRA.

[Submitter's Note: Section 10 of the GPRA Modernization Act (GPRAMA) directs agencies to publish their strategic plans in machine-readable format, like this StratML rendition. Strategy Markup Language is an international standard — ISO 17469-1.] To provide comments regarding this report, please contact Stephen Sanford, Managing Director, who can be reached at: spel@gao.gov, by phone at (202) 512-4707, or at the following address: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Room 7814, Washington, DC 20548

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United States Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Description:

GAO is an independent, nonpartisan professional services agency in the legislative branch of the federal government. Commonly known as the audit and investigative arm of the Congress or the “congressional watchdog,” we examine how taxpayer dollars are spent and advise lawmakers and agency heads on ways to make government work better. GAO was established under the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 to investigate how federal dollars were spent. The Comptroller General of the United States is the head of GAO.

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Chief Accountant

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Chief Actuary

Vacant :
Chief Economist

GAO Teams

Applied Research and Methods (ARM) :
Issue Areas: Practical application of economics, statistics, qualitative and quantitative social science research methods, information and actuarial science, program evaluation and advanced data collection strategies. Expertise: Providing technical expertise to GAO mission and support teams, assuring analytical rigor and overall quality of GAO information.

Contracting and National Security Acquisitions (CNSA) :
Issue Areas: U.S. government spending for goods and services—nearly half a trillion dollars annually. Expertise: Helping ensure that major acquisitions at DOD, NASA, and DHS are managed appropriately and determining whether the govern-

ment is making sound business decisions and appropriately overseeing contractors.

Defense Capabilities and Management (DCM) :
Issue Areas: DOD and the Intelligence Community, which cost taxpayers over \$700 billion and \$85 billion a year, respectively. Expertise: Supporting congressional oversight of DOD and the Intelligence Community as they prepare to meet national security needs, including modernizing and transforming to meet complex and evolving threats.

Education, Workforce, and Income Security (EWIS) :

Issue Areas: Federal programs and legislation that affect the quality of life for everyone, from infancy through old age. Expertise: Helping ensure the well-being of children and students; fostering and protecting the workforce; and ensuring adequate care and support for the disadvantaged, veterans, people with disabilities, and older Americans.

Financial Management and Assurance (FMA) :
Issue Areas: Federal financial management and operations; stewardship of financial resources. Expertise: Helping improve and transform federal financial management and operations to meet existing and emerging critical accountability challenges and ensure that reliable, useful, and timely financial information is available for making decisions, managing costs, and monitoring performance day to day.

Financial Markets and Community Investment (FMCI) :

Issue Areas: Areas that are critical to the nation's economic well-being. Expertise: Examining federal regulatory efforts to promote financial stability and fair and orderly markets and assessing the effectiveness of federal programs supporting housing opportunity, stable communities, access to credit, and consumer protection.

Financial Markets and Community Investment (FMCI) :

Issue Areas: Areas that are critical to the nation's economic well-being. Expertise: Examining federal regulatory efforts to promote financial stability and fair and orderly markets and assessing the effectiveness of federal programs supporting housing opportunity, stable communities, access to credit, and consumer protection.

Forensic Audits and Investigative Service (FAIS) :
Issue Areas: Forensic audits and investigations of vulnerable federal programs and funding to help detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Expertise: Helping to combat fraud and preserve integrity in government programs using data analytics, investigative techniques, and GAO's Fraud Risk Framework to assess agencies' efforts, and managing FraudNet so the public can report allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement to GAO.

Health Care (HC) :
Issue Areas: Health care policies and programs make up about a quarter of federal spending and have tangible effects on people's lives. Expertise: Helping ensure that public and pri-

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Stakeholders (continued)

vate health care programs provide access to quality care, protect the public, and remain fiscally sustainable.

Homeland Security and Justice (HSJ) :

Issue Areas: National security, law enforcement, justice, immigration, and emergency preparedness issues. *Expertise:* Enhancing efforts to counter domestic threats; helping strengthen border, transportation, and maritime security; improving emergency and disaster preparedness and response; and strengthening protection of critical infrastructures and the justice and immigration systems.

Information Technology and Cybersecurity (ITC) :

Issue Areas: Critical insight and oversight into federal efforts on topics including cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, IT management and modernization, system acquisitions, IT workforce, and IT supply chain. *Expertise:* Helping federal agencies strengthen information security and protect computer systems that support the vital infrastructures, and build capacity to effectively and securely manage IT acquisitions and operations.

International Affairs and Trade (IAT) :

Issue Areas: Federal policies and programs that address global economic, security, and humanitarian problems. *Expertise:* Helping assess performance and accountability of U.S. foreign aid programs, foreign affairs functions and activities, agencies' efforts to combat international terrorism and other transnational threats (including weapons of mass destruction), trade, and U.S. assistance to multilateral and nongovernmental organizations.

Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) :

Issue Areas: Federal efforts to manage the nation's air, water, land, food, energy resources, environmental liabilities, and nuclear security, as well as Federal policies and programs serving tribes and their members. *Expertise:* Helping ensure that programs and policies protect the environment; ensure food safety; address agriculture issues; ensure resilient, sustainable, and secure energy; address U.S. and international nuclear security and cleanup; and fulfill the federal government's responsibilities to tribes and their members.

Physical Infrastructure (PI) :

Issue Areas: Federal programs and policies addressing infrastructure challenges in the United States. *Expertise:* Assessing the funding, operation, and maintenance of transportation systems, telecommunications networks, the postal service, oil and gas pipelines, and federal facilities.

Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) :

Issue Areas: Providing the Congress with critical understanding of science and technology (S&T) issues to ensure continued American innovation, competitiveness, security, and well-being. *Expertise:* Support congressional S&T understanding, decision-making, and evidence-based policymaking through a wide variety of formal reporting, on-demand training, professional consulting, and new digital services such as advanced data analytics, machine learning (ML), and artificial intelligence (AI).

Strategic Issues (SI) :

Issue Areas: The federal government's role in achieving national goals and its ability to deliver meaningful results. *Expertise:* Helping address national challenges, such as long-term fiscal imbalances, and improve agencies' strategic planning, workforce agility, performance, and management.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC) :

Issue Areas: OGC's attorneys and legal support professionals advise and support GAO's analysts on all GAO products; issue legal decisions and opinions to Congress and the public on government contracts, bid protests, federal appropriations law, and other matters; and provide legal services and ethics guidance and oversight to the agency. *Expertise:* Ensuring the legal accuracy and contextual sophistication of GAO's work.

Chief Administrative Office (CAO) :

Issue Areas: Improving GAO operations to maximize value, achieve operational excellence, and deliver quality results to the Congress. *Expertise:* Support agency operations in the management of talent, learning, finance, acquisition, information technology, records, facilities, security, and labor relations.

GAO Staff Offices :

Audit Policy & Quality Assurance (APQA), Continuous Process Improvement Office (CPIO), Office of Congressional Relations (CR), Office of Opportunity and Inclusiveness (O&I), Office of Public Affairs (OPA), and the Office of Strategic Planning & External Liaison (SPEL) ~ Issue Areas: Strengthening relations with the Congress; improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of GAO's work; ensuring that GAO is a respectful and inclusive workplace with equal employment opportunity for all; and improving how GAO and other audit organizations respond to evolving trends and emerging issues. *Expertise:* Support agency operations in several areas—congressional relations, continuous process improvement, opportunity and inclusiveness, public affairs, strategic planning, and external outreach.

Vision

Constitutional responsibilities are met, performance improves, and the federal government is held accountable

Mission

To support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people

Values

Accountability: Enhance the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility of the federal government.

Integrity: Conduct professional, objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, non-ideological, fair, and balanced work.

Reliability: Produce timely, accurate, constructive, clear, and candid products.

People: Valued | Respected | Treated Fairly

1. Well-Being & Financial Security

Address Current and Emerging Challenges to the Well-Being and Financial Security of the American People

Stakeholder(s)

American People

1.1. Health

Serve the Health Needs of an Aging and Diverse Population

Programs and Financing to Serve the Health Needs of an Aging and Diverse Population ~ Total health care spending in the United States continues to grow faster than the economy. CBO projects federal spending on major health care programs net of offsetting receipts to grow from \$1.3 trillion in fiscal year 2021 to \$2.3 trillion in fiscal year 2031. The growth will be driven, in part, by the aging of the population and increasing health care spending per person. The ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—including increases in mental health conditions and the ongoing need for vaccines and therapeutics—are likely to result in additional health care spending growth. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of technological innovations, like telemedicine and autonomous robots in hospitals, but such health advances generally increase total spending. The demands to meet Americans' health needs are growing in volume and complexity, while effectively and efficiently managing health care programs (such as Medicare, Medicaid, and programs for veterans, military servicemembers and their families, and tribes and their members) is becoming more challenging. The serious repercussions of the pandemic underscore the importance of preparing for, detecting, responding to, and recovering from catastrophic biological incidents. These events can disrupt health care delivery and worsen longer-term public health concerns, such as drug misuse and mental health conditions. For example, some of the populations most at risk of severe COVID-19 illness are also populations that are disadvantaged in their access to health care, including individuals from specific racial or ethnic groups and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Disparities in health outcomes and the provision of health care for these and other potentially vulnerable populations will continue to be a focus of federal health care programs. GAO's work will continue to help the Congress by examining and addressing public and private health care coverage, health care financing and program integrity, health disparities, and the management of public health.

1.1.1. Insurance

Assess trends, costs, and issues in private health insurance coverage

1.1.2. Federal Programs

Assess efforts to reduce improper payments and fraud, waste, and abuse in federal health care programs

1.1.3. Medicare

Evaluate Medicare reform, financing, expenditures, and operations

1.1.4. Medicaid

Evaluate Medicaid financing, expenditures, and oversight

1.1.5. Vulnerable Populations

Assess efforts to provide health care for potentially vulnerable populations, including programs serving tribes and their members

Stakeholder(s):

Vulnerable Populations

Tribes

1.1.6. VA & DoD

Assess actions and options for improving VA's and DOD's health care services

Stakeholder(s):

VA

DoD

1.1.7. Public Health

Evaluate the effectiveness of federal programs to promote and ensure public health, including the safety and efficacy of drugs and medical devices and preparing for, responding to, and recovering from public health emergencies

1.2. Learning

Assess life-long learning trends and challenges to ensure U.S. competitiveness

Lifelong Learning to Enhance U.S. Competitiveness ~ Access to high quality lifelong learning opportunities is central to enhancing U.S. competitiveness in the global economy. Potential workers' access to these opportunities is impeded by inequities in primary and secondary education, college tuition costs, and greater needs among nontraditional students for coordinated support, such as child care. The COVID-19 pandemic created additional challenges, exposed existing inequities that impede access to instruction and work, and highlighted changes in employment relationships and work attitudes. • Many students, particularly those from underserved communities who lack equitable opportunities for safe, high-quality learning, graduate from high school unprepared for the workplace or college. • As technology transforms the workplace, most American jobs will require at least some higher education. At the same time, rising tuition costs have propelled federal student loan debt to almost \$1.6 trillion and have impeded access to higher education for many. • Federal education and workforce training programs must work together to build a knowledgeable and skilled workforce while adjusting to the evolving economy, work environment, and local needs.

GAO's work will help the Congress assess these trends and challenges to ensure U.S. competitiveness.

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

1.2.1. K-12 Education

Assess policy and administrative challenges to improving school readiness and equitable access to a safe, high-quality K-12 education

1.2.2. Higher Education

Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness, equity, access, and accountability in higher education, including programs that provide federal student aid

1.2.3. Jobs & Skills

Identify improvements to advance the efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and results of programs that facilitate job opportunities and enhance skills for workers, including youth and veterans, for in-demand occupations in an evolving economy

Stakeholder(s):

Workers

Veterans

Youth

In-Demand Occupations

1.3. Benefits & Protections

Benefits and Protections for Workers, Families, and Children ~ The federal government and states jointly administer a range of programs that promote employment opportunities and safe workplaces, help people who cannot work, and support and protect low-income and vulnerable populations, including children. The nation's safety net programs have been profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as by longer-term shifts in the U.S. economy. Following the pandemic, an increased number of households sought public assistance and challenged federally supported programs' ability to provide efficient services while ensuring program integrity. For example, federal outlays for unemployment compensation increased from \$117 billion in fiscal year 2011 to \$472 billion in 2020 and an estimated \$539 billion in 2021. The estimated 2021 outlays for food assistance also rose sharply in recent years to \$202 billion. GAO's work will help the Congress address challenges to ensure that those with needs can access efficient, effective, and coordinated programs while also protecting program integrity.

Stakeholder(s):

Workers

Children

Families

1.3.1. Assistance & Social Services

Identify opportunities to improve programs that provide social services and economic and nutrition assistance to individuals, families, and children

Stakeholder(s):

Individuals

Children

Families

1.3.2. Worker Protection

Assess the effectiveness of strategies and safeguards to protect workers, both domestically and internationally

Stakeholder(s):

Workers

1.3.3. Individuals

Identify ways to improve federal policies and support for individuals, including veterans and others with disabilities

Stakeholder(s):

Veterans with Disabilities

Others with Disabilities

1.4. Retirement Security

Conduct analyses that will help the Congress and policymakers assist millions of Americans in attaining and maintaining a secure retirement

Financial Security and Well-Being of an Aging Population ~ Ensuring that older adults have a financially secure retirement is a shared goal of government, employers, and individuals. However, several factors pose challenges to achieving this goal. Social Security continues to face serious long-term financial challenges—with the assets in its Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund expected to be depleted by 2033—largely because people are living longer and there are fewer working adults to support benefits for a growing number of retirees. In addition to Social Security, employer-sponsored retirement plans provide a vital source of income for older adults. However, employers have shifted more responsibility and risk to individuals for ensuring their own retirement security and many workers lack equitable access to such plans. As a result, many individuals will have to work longer, save more, and learn to manage those savings. Meanwhile, despite the growing need for community-based services to help seniors remain independent, fiscal pressures at all levels of government may limit funding for such services. To address these challenges, GAO will conduct analyses that will help the Congress and policymakers assist millions of Americans in attaining and maintaining a secure retirement.

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

Americans

Policymakers

Retirees

1.4.1. Older Adults

Assess the policy and administrative challenges to financing government benefits for older adults

Stakeholder(s):

Older Adults

1.4.2. Retirement Policies & Programs

Assess policies and programs that help individuals achieve financial security and maintain their independence in retirement

Stakeholder(s):

Retirees

1.4.3. Retirement Plans

Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of private and public employer-sponsored retirement plans in providing older adults an equitable and financially secure retirement

Stakeholder(s):

Older Adults

Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans

1.5. Justice

Inform and help Congress and key agency stakeholders assess the U.S. elections system as well as whether the law enforcement and justice systems effectively respond while also ensuring the protection of individuals' rights and civil liberties

Fair, Responsive, and Effective System of Justice ~ The American people face a wide range of criminal threats that require a responsive, fair, and effective system of justice. Events across the United States have sparked discussions about the role of federal and local law enforcement, particularly their use of lethal force, but also their capabilities in identifying and addressing sources of criminal threats, and in processing individuals fairly, effectively, and justly throughout the justice system. In addition, debates continue on how best to ensure fair, equitable, and reliable elections. Communities across the United States continue to experience violent crimes, including gun violence and mass shootings that result in casualties at schools, events, and other locations. The growing amount of illicit drug trafficking activity also has led to an increasing number of overdose deaths. Further, the ever-evolving opportunities for online criminals to use digital platforms to exploit vulnerable populations has helped enable the trafficking of humans in communities across the United States. Law enforcement's ability to address these issues, such as by identifying and countering illicit activity online, will depend on its ability to understand and employ new technologies while also ensuring the rights of citizens. Regarding those brought to justice, debate also continues on how best to ensure the nation's criminal and civil penalties, as well as sentencing guidelines, help form the foundation for a fair and equitable judicial system. Effectively managing the federal offender population remains critical, especially ensuring that rehabilitative programs help facilitate better outcomes that discourage returning to crime for adults and juveniles re-entering society. To address, mitigate, and manage these significant and vast threats, U.S. law enforcement and justice systems need to continuously adapt to changing approaches used by criminal organizations and others. For example, it will be essential for the federal government to disrupt illicit drug trafficking and enhance criminal justice efforts to address drug misuse. In addition, state and local governments and other sectors of society have key roles in addressing these threats. It will be important for the federal government to ensure that training, technical assistance, and equipment that it provides federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies are effective and used in accordance with federal guidelines. GAO's work will continue to inform and help the Congress and key agency stakeholders assess the U.S. elections system, as well as whether the law enforcement and justice systems effectively respond while also ensuring the protection of individuals' rights and civil liberties.

1.5.1. Criminal Activities

Assess federal efforts to prevent, deter, investigate, and prosecute criminal activities, including violent and white collar crime

1.5.2. Rights & Vulnerable Populations

Assess federal efforts to protect vulnerable populations and ensure the rights of U.S. citizens

Stakeholder(s):

Vulnerable Populations

U.S. Citizens

1.5.3. Federal Offenders

Review the federal government’s efforts to confine, rehabilitate, and monitor the release of convicted federal offenders

Stakeholder(s):

Federal Offenders

1.5.4. States, Tribes & Localities

Evaluate federal efforts to assist states, tribes, and localities with ensuring an effective law enforcement and justice system

Stakeholder(s):

States

Localities

Tribes

1.6. Housing & Communities

Help Congress monitor the effectiveness of federal agencies' efforts in sustaining communities, particularly those suffering from historical and current inequities

Housing Finance and Viable Communities ~ To support communities, the Congress appropriated and the federal government provided billions of dollars toward supporting homeownership, affordable housing, homelessness assistance, and local economic development and small businesses (which employ about half of the nation's workforce). For example, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Agriculture, and the Treasury administer rental housing programs to help the most vulnerable populations find and maintain affordable housing. The economic and social well-being of communities across the United States faces challenges — from persistent racial and ethnic disparities to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic disruption. Further, the nation's housing supply faces significant constraints in meeting demand, in part because of local policies. For example, some communities have adopted restrictive zoning and land-use regulations that can prevent further growth in supply, adversely affecting housing affordability. In addition, the homeless population has also been growing due to factors including higher rental prices, evictions, and job losses that may worsen due to COVID-19. In 2020, about 580,000 people experienced homelessness, according to HUD. GAO's work will help the Congress monitor the effectiveness of federal agencies' efforts in sustaining communities, particularly those suffering from historical and current inequities.

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

Communities

1.6.1. Homeownership & Financing

Assess how the federal government can balance supporting equity and access in homeownership and managing financial risk while reforming the federal role in housing finance

1.6.2. Rental Housing

Examine the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of federal programs that support affordable rental housing, including how the programs seek to support equity in addressing the needs of different populations during times of both economic stability and disruption

Stakeholder(s):

Renters

1.6.3. Homeless Assistance

Assess federal homeless assistance efforts and their effects on both homeless individuals and their families

Stakeholder(s):

Homeless Individuals

Homeless Families

1.6.4. Community & Economic Assistance

Monitor federal community and economic development assistance and its effect on communities, particularly those with high or persistent poverty

Stakeholder(s):

Communities

Developers

1.6.5. Small Businesses

Assess the effectiveness of federal initiatives to assist small businesses, particularly those that are socially or economically disadvantaged

Stakeholder(s):

Small Businesses

1.7. Financial System & Consumer Protection

Help Congress monitor the effectiveness of efforts to oversee the financial system and ensure consumer financial protection and consumer product safety

A Stable Financial System and Sufficient Consumer Protection ~ The U.S. financial regulatory structure remains complex with responsibilities fragmented among a number of regulators that have overlapping authorities. This complexity introduces significant challenges for the efficient and effective oversight of financial institutions and activities. While segments of the financial services industry have withstood challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, other segments, such as money market mutual funds, have required regulatory intervention. Advances in technology and the widespread use of the internet and mobile devices have helped fuel the growth of fintech—innovative financial technology products and services. Federal regulators face challenges in overseeing fintech and protecting consumers from practices that exploit vulnerable populations (e. g., elder financial exploitation) or pose additional financial risks. In addition, the United States' continued reliance on imported goods underscores the need to ensure the safety of manufactured products. GAO's work will help the Congress monitor the effectiveness of federal agencies' efforts to oversee a dynamic financial system and help ensure consumer financial protection and consumer product safety.

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

Consumers

1.7.1. Financial Services

Assess regulators' efforts to oversee the financial services industry and maintain stability, competitiveness, equity, and efficiency in the financial system amid significant market, technological, and regulatory changes

Stakeholder(s):

Regulators

Financial Services Industry

1.7.2. Laws & Regulations

Assess federal oversight of consumer protection laws and regulations for financial services and products and for manufactured items

1.8. Natural Resources & Environment

Inform the Congress and federal agencies as they engage relevant stakeholders in addressing natural resources and environmental policy issues

Responsible and Sustainable Stewardship of Natural Resources and the Environment ~ Responsible and sustainable stewardship of natural resources and the environment encompasses some of the nation's most complex and interdependent issues. It includes maintaining the reliability and security of energy supplies and infrastructure; safeguarding the quality of the nation's air, water, and land resources; protecting the safety of the nation's food and water; enhancing the resilience of flood management and critical infrastructure for energy and water in response to risks from natural disasters and climate change; and minimizing the fiscal impact to the federal government of risks posed by climate change and nuclear and hazardous waste. Managing these issues requires federal agencies to balance competing objectives, such as supporting economic growth today while protecting resources for the future. Federal agencies also must ensure access to natural resources and equitable environmental protection for all, including disadvantaged urban and rural communities, tribes, and colonias. Moreover, federal agencies manage resources for multiple uses; for example, agencies must manage water for safe drinking, wildlife habitat, agriculture, and energy. To sustainably manage natural resources and protect the environment, federal agencies need integrated and multifaceted approaches that take a long-term perspective and that involve cooperation across multiple levels of government and with the private sector. GAO's work will seek to inform the Congress and federal agencies as they engage relevant stakeholders in addressing these and other public policy issues.

1.8.1. Energy

Assess federal efforts to ensure secure, resilient, sustainable, and equitable energy supplies

1.8.2. Land & Water

Assess federal strategies for sustainably managing the nation's land and water resources

1.8.3. Environmental Protection & Climate

Assess federal environmental protection strategies and efforts to manage climate-related risks

1.8.4. Environmental Liabilities

Assess efforts to manage the federal government's environmental liabilities

1.8.5. Food & Agriculture

Assess federal programs' ability to ensure a safe food supply, and address agricultural risks and environmental impacts

1.9. Infrastructure

Help Congress ensure effective oversight of infrastructure funding

A Viable, Safe, Secure, and Accessible National Physical Infrastructure ~ The physical infrastructure of the United States—including transportation, telecommunications, the postal system, and federal facilities—plays a recognized, necessary role in every American’s daily life. A number of challenges, including changes in technology, the movement of people and goods, and aging investments, have placed strains on the infrastructure system and complicated efforts to ensure that it is viable, efficient, safe, and accessible. In acknowledgment of these challenges, the \$1.2 trillion dollar Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was enacted in November 2021. IIJA included several new infrastructure programs and major increases in federal funding for areas such as highways, bridges, rail, and broadband. The legislation also includes over 30 provisions for GAO to conduct oversight of new and existing federal programs. GAO’s work will help the Congress ensure effective oversight of this historic increase in infrastructure funding. This includes, among other activities, examining the extent to which federal investments meet their goals, ensure access, and leverage emerging technologies.

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

1.9.1. Transportation Investments, Policies & Programs

Assess federal investments, policies, and programs that support transportation infrastructure

1.9.2. Transportation Safety

Assess federal regulation of transportation safety and efforts to fund improvements in safety

1.9.3. Communities & Consumers

Evaluate how federal transportation policies and programs address the needs of communities and consumers, including efficiency, effectiveness, equity, access, resilience, and reliability

Stakeholder(s):

Communities

Consumers

1.9.4. Telecommunications

Assess federal efforts to support and oversee telecommunications in the public interest, including economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of access

1.9.5. Postal Service

Assess the U.S. Postal Service's efforts to ensure its viability while accomplishing its mission

Stakeholder(s):

U.S. Postal Service

1.9.6. Buildings, Property & Assets

Assess federal efforts to manage and secure the government's buildings, property, and other physical assets

1.10. Tribes

Help Congress determine how best to meet the government's commitments to tribes

Efforts to Fulfill the Federal Government's Responsibilities to Tribes, Their Members, and Individual Descendants ~ Tribes' political sovereignty predates the United States, and in the 18th and 19th centuries, many tribes surrendered vast tracts of land and natural resources in exchange for commitments made by the federal government in treaties. Through these treaties, statutes, and historical relations with Indian tribes, including Alaska Natives, the United States has undertaken a unique trust responsibility to protect and support Indian tribes and their members. Pursuant to specific federal statutes, and in some cases consistent with this trust responsibility, a number of federal agencies provide programs, services, and funding to federally and state-recognized tribes and their members. The federal government also acts as trustee for certain lands owned by tribes, by their members, and by individuals who are Indian by descent or are beneficiaries of a trust account, but not enrolled members of a tribe (hereafter, individual descendants). The success of these efforts depends on federal agencies overcoming longstanding capacity and management challenges as well as a clear federal commitment to government-to-government dialogue with tribes on policies and programs that affect them. GAO's work has shown federal agencies have ineffectively administered Indian education and health care programs, and inefficiently met their responsibility for managing the development of Indian energy resources. Additional challenges include climate change and environmental stresses that threaten tribes' water rights, lands, and resources. GAO's oversight of federal programs that serve tribes and their members will help the Congress determine how best to meet the government's longstanding commitments.

Stakeholder(s):

Tribes

1.10.1. Policies & Programs

Evaluate federal policies and programs that serve Indian tribes, their members, and other indigenous groups

Stakeholder(s):

Indian Tribes

Indigenous Groups

Tribal Members

1.10.2. Cultural, Environmental & Natural Resources

Assess federal efforts to protect Native American cultural, environmental, and natural resources

1.10.3. Self-Determination, Self-Governance & Economic Development

Examine federal efforts to foster tribal self-determination, self-governance, and economic development

2. Security & Global Interdependence

Help the Congress Respond to Changing Security Threats and the Challenges of Global Interdependence

2.1. Threats & Disasters

Help the Congress and key agency stakeholders assess efforts to protect against and respond to threats and disasters, and to prioritize and allocate resources for homeland security

Protect and Secure the Homeland from Threats and Disasters ~ The United States faces increasingly complex threats and challenges to securing the homeland. The DHS Secretary said in 2021 that racial, ethnic, religious, and ideologically motivated domestic violent extremism poses the most lethal and persistent terrorism-related threat to the homeland. The FBI has noted that terrorist threats to the homeland have expanded from predominantly externally-directed plots to attacks carried out both by homegrown violent extremists, including some inspired by foreign terror organizations, and by self-radicalized domestic terrorists. This rise in domestic terrorism has been accelerated by foreign governments' use of cyber capabilities to aggravate social and racial tensions. Further, threats from non-U.S. actors, such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran continue to evolve. In addition, concerns remain that ISIS and al Qaeda both have branches and affiliates in Afghanistan and other foreign locations that will require counterterrorism vigilance, as both groups are intent on attacking U.S. interests in the region and overseas. Foreign governments use cyber capabilities to aggravate social, racial, and ethnic tensions in the United States, undermine trust in authorities, and target assets and infrastructure. Flows of both legitimate and illicit travel and trade to the United States continue to challenge efforts to effectively secure U.S. borders. Ongoing physical and technological threats to the transportation network and critical infrastructure sectors underscore the need for effective, risk-based security programs. Continuing to secure seaports and incoming cargo, as well as performing rescue missions in severe conditions, is critical to protecting the maritime environment. Disasters, including hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, are increasing in severity due to the effects of climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic shows the catastrophic impacts of biological threats to the security of the homeland. An increase in these disasters, alongside potential terrorist and other attacks, pose serious challenges to federal agencies that must respond to and help recovery efforts from such events. GAO's work will help the Congress and key agency stakeholders assess efforts to protect against and respond to threats and disasters, and to prioritize and allocate resources for homeland security.

2.1.1. Homeland Security

Assess federal homeland security management, resources, acquisitions, and stakeholder coordination

2.1.2. Immigration & Border Security

Assess efforts to strengthen border security and address immigration enforcement and services issues

2.1.3. Terrorism & Threats

Assess efforts to strengthen the sharing of terrorism and other threat-related information

2.1.4. Transportation Security

Assess efforts to strengthen security in all transportation modes

2.1.5. Emergency Preparedness & Response

Assess U.S. national emergency preparedness and response capabilities and efforts to strengthen the nation's resilience against future disasters

2.1.6. Insurance & Disaster Loans

Assess the efficiency, cost, and management of catastrophic insurance and disaster loan programs, including how climate change and the equitable distribution of resources are taken into consideration

2.1.7. Critical Infrastructure

Assess efforts to strengthen the protection of the nation's critical infrastructure to ensure its security and resilience

2.1.8. Terrorism & Threats

Analyze the implementation and results of federal efforts to prevent, deter, investigate, and prosecute domestic and international terrorism and other threats to the homeland

2.2. Military

Effectively and Efficiently Utilize Resources for Military Capabilities and Readiness

Stakeholder(s):

Department of Defense :

The Department of Defense (DOD) faces multiple challenges while trying to remain ready to meet a broad array of threats. The re-emergence of great power strategic competition among nations; re-building readiness to prepare for conflicts with peer and near-peer adversaries; mitigating existing kinetic threats along with cyber, information-related, and other emerging threats; expanding space operations; and controlling costs collectively complicate DOD's planning for the future. DOD faces difficult decisions

related to how to address these complex and evolving threats.

Department of Energy :

GAO's work will help the Congress, DOD, and relevant divisions of the Department of Energy (DOE) address these challenges and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations in areas such as personnel and enterprise management, acquisition, contracting, defense industrial base management, military structure and operations, strategic warfare, and the nuclear security enterprise.

2.2.1. Operations & Readiness

Assess DOD's ability to meet operational demands while rebuilding readiness and preparing for future missions

2.2.2. Cyber, Space & Information Threats

Assess DOD's efforts to prepare for and respond to cyber, space, and information-related threats and operations

2.2.3. Human Capital

Assess DOD's human capital management to ensure a high-quality diverse total workforce of military personnel, federal civilians, and contractors

2.2.4. Weapon Systems

Assess the ability of DOD's weapon systems science and technology, research and development, and acquisition programs to deliver effective, sustainable, survivable, and affordable solutions to the warfighter in a timely manner

Stakeholder(s):

Warfighters

2.2.5. Contract Management

Assess DOD's progress in improving contract management

2.2.6. Weapon Systems

Assess DOD's progress in improving the maintenance and sustainment of weapon systems throughout their life cycle and other logistics functions and activities

2.2.7. Defense Infrastructure

Assess DOD's management of the defense support infrastructure

2.2.8. Nuclear Security

Assess efforts of DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and DOD to maintain and modernize the nuclear security enterprise, nuclear force structure, and associated weapon systems

Stakeholder(s):

**National Nuclear Security
Administration (NNSA)**

2.2.9. Organizational Structures & Processes

Assess DOD's business operations efforts to adapt to and leverage organizational structures and management processes to maximize efficiencies and performance

Stakeholder(s):

DoD

2.2.10. WMD

Assess DOD's preparedness to counter weapons of mass destruction and current and emerging technological or unconventional threats and capabilities

Stakeholder(s):

DoD

2.3. Foreign Policy & Economic Interests

Advance and Protect U.S. Foreign Policy and International Economic Interests

To advance national interests and values abroad through global engagement in an ever-changing international environment, U.S. foreign policy in recent years has focused on providing more sustainable and equitable foreign assistance, countering an array of security threats, addressing various humanitarian crises, including those caused by climate change, and navigating changes in global trade. GAO's work will continue to inform the Congress of U.S. efforts to execute security assistance to help counter threats to the nation and overseas partners; execute U.S. bilateral and multilateral foreign assistance programs that are sustainable and equitable for recipients; execute programs to advance U.S. trade interests and assess the overall effect of COVID-19 on U.S. trade and U.S. government agencies; manage foreign affairs functions and efforts to build a more diverse workforce; and assess the effects of a global supplier base, foreign investment, and the sufficiency of critical resources to protect the nation.

2.3.1. Threats

Analyze the implementation and results of U.S. and international efforts to counter threats to the United States and its foreign partners' national security

2.3.2. Foreign Assistance

Analyze the implementation and management of U.S. bilateral and multilateral foreign assistance and efforts to make it more efficient, effective, and sustainable and ensure it promotes greater diversity, equity, and inclusion

2.3.3. International Trade

Analyze how international trade programs serve U.S. interests and how the United States can influence the world economy

2.3.4. Diplomacy & Multilateral Organizations

Assess the management and effectiveness of U.S. diplomatic efforts and membership in multilateral organizations

2.3.5. Foreign Investment & Supplier Base

Assess efforts to manage the effects of foreign investment and a global supplier base on U.S. national interests

2.4. Intelligence

Improve the Intelligence Community's Management and Integration to Enhance Intelligence Activities

As the national security environment evolves, the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) faces an increasing number of challenges to be successful. To address these challenges, ODNI, which heads the IC, works to ensure that standards, processes, and tools across the community are standardized and efficient. GAO's work will help the Congress to improve how the IC manages infrastructure, builds a capable and diverse workforce, and supports the military and other government operations.

Stakeholder(s):

Intelligence Community :

A variety of intelligence organizations — comprised of 18 elements that work independently and collaboratively — are responsible for gathering, analyzing, and producing intelligence necessary to conduct foreign relations and national security activities, according to their established foreign or domestic focus. They include intelligence components of the five military services within the Department of Defense, the Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI).

Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)

Department of Defense

Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis

Federal Bureau of Investigation

2.4.1. Organizational Structures & Processes

Analyze the IC's business operations and efforts to integrate and leverage organizational structures and management processes to maximize efficiencies and performance

2.4.2. Acquisition & Management

Assess the IC's acquisition and management programs and processes

2.4.3. Planning & Efforts

Evaluate the IC's planning and efforts that support military operations, diplomatic activities, and other government activities

2.5. Cybersecurity

Help Congress assess efforts to address the major cybersecurity challenges facing the nation

Ensure the Cybersecurity of the Nation — Federal agencies and our nation’s critical infrastructures — such as energy, transportation systems, communications, and financial services — are dependent on technology systems to carry out operations and to process, maintain, and report essential information. These systems are inherently vulnerable to cyberattacks. For example, they are highly complex and dynamic, which increases the difficulty in identifying, managing, and protecting their numerous operating systems, applications, and devices. Compounding these vulnerabilities, systems and networks used by federal agencies and the nation’s critical infrastructure are often interconnected with other internal and external systems and networks, including the internet. With this greater connectivity, threat actors are increasingly willing and capable of conducting a cyberattack on agencies and on critical infrastructure that could be disruptive and destructive. GAO’s work will help the Congress assess efforts to address the major cybersecurity challenges facing the nation, which include establishing and implementing a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, securing federal agency and critical infrastructure systems from cyberattacks, and protecting privacy and sensitive data.

2.5.1. Strategy & Oversight

Assess efforts to establish a comprehensive national and global cybersecurity strategy and perform effective oversight

2.5.2. Systems & Information Security

Assess efforts to secure federal systems and information

2.5.3. Critical Infrastructure

Assess efforts to protect the nation’s critical infrastructure from cyber threats and timely respond to incidents

2.5.4. Privacy & Sensitive Data

Assess efforts to protect privacy and sensitive data

3. National Challenges

Help Transform the Federal Government to Address National Challenges

3.1. Finances

Help Congress make informed decisions on ways to address the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges and strengthen federal financial management

Analyze the Government’s Fiscal Condition and Opportunities to Strengthen Management of Federal Finances ~ Even before the federal government’s extensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was on an unsustainable long-term fiscal path. Publicly held debt is growing faster than the economy — it is expected to reach an all-time high within ten years and continue to grow at an increasing pace over the long term. The federal government’s unsustainable long-term fiscal path poses serious economic, security, and social challenges if not addressed. GAO’s work on congressional and agency budget processes; debt management; federal grant funding and other fiscal assistance to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments; federal financial reporting; improper payments; and tax administration and policy will help the Congress make informed decisions on ways to address the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges and strengthen federal financial management.

3.1.1. Budget & Debt

Analyze factors affecting the federal short- and long-term budget outlooks, debt management, and agencies’ budget decisions and operations

3.1.2. Grants & Financial Assistance

Analyze and examine the intersection of the federal government’s federal grant funding and other fiscal assistance to states, localities, territories, and tribes

Stakeholder(s):

Grant Applicants

Territories

States

Tribes

Localities

3.1.3. Information, Controls, Reporting & Compliance

Assess the reliability of financial information, effectiveness of internal controls over financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements related to the government’s fiscal position and financing sources

3.1.4. Tax System & Policies

Assess the efficiency, equity, and administrability of the current tax system and policies, and of proposed changes

3.1.5. Revenue & Tax Gap

Identify opportunities to reduce the tax gap and further protect revenue

3.2. Accountability

Help agencies combat fraud and preserve integrity in government programs

Support Government Accountability by Identifying Fraud, Waste, and Abuse, and Needed Improvements in Internal Controls ~ Fraud, waste, and abuse cost taxpayers billions of dollars annually, undermine confidence in government, prevent federal programs from fulfilling their intended purposes, and create national security risks. To minimize fraud, waste, and abuse, and improve accountability across the government, federal agencies must improve their internal controls. GAO's work identifies ways for agencies to strengthen accountability and internal controls for federal programs, assets, and operations. GAO will help the Congress by conducting forensic audits, internal control reviews, and investigations of vulnerable federal programs and funding to help detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse and improve accountability. GAO's work will also identify opportunities for agencies to strategically manage fraud risks according to leading practices in GAO's Fraud Risk Framework,¹ thus helping agencies combat fraud and preserve integrity in government programs. Additionally, GAO will use tips received through FraudNet — a public resource for confidentially reporting allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse in federal programs—to inform its efforts. ¹ GAO identified leading practices for managing fraud risks and organized them into the Fraud Risk Framework. GAO, A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs, GAO-15-593SP (Washington, D.C.: July 2015).

3.2.1. Fraud

Identify ways to strengthen fraud risk management and antifraud controls for federal programs, assets, and operations

3.2.2. Audits

Perform forensic audits to identify and address vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, and abuse

3.2.3. Security Vulnerability

Conduct controls testing, security vulnerability assessments, and investigations

3.2.4. Allegations

Process allegations received through FraudNet

**Stakeholder(s):
FraudNet**

3.2.5. Accountability & Internal Controls

Identify ways to strengthen accountability and internal controls for federal programs, assets, and operations

3.3.1. Risks & Reforms

Highlight High Risk federal programs and operations and assess government-wide management reforms

3.3.2. Results

Assess efforts to improve results-oriented management across the federal government

3.3.3. Workforce

Analyze and assess efforts to develop an agile, skilled, and diverse workforce essential to achieving the missions of a high-performing and collaborative federal government

3.3.4. Acquisition

Identify ways to improve federal agencies' acquisition of goods and services

3.3.5. IT

Assess the federal government's planning, implementation, and use of IT to improve performance and modernize federal programs and operations

3.3.6. Grants & Assistance

Identify ways to improve the administration and management of grants and other federal assistance across all levels of government

3.3.7. Fragmentation, Overlap, Duplication & Collaboration

Identify and assess efforts to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication, and to enhance collaboration

3.3.8. Data

Identify ways to improve the quality, transparency, and usefulness of federal government data to promote open government innovation and accountability

3.3.9. Civilian Space Programs

Identify ways to improve civilian space programs at federal agencies

Stakeholder(s):

Civilian Space Programs

3.4. Science & Technology

Help Congress navigate increasingly complex technologies

Support Congressional Knowledge, Understanding, and Oversight of Science and Technology Issues ~ Rapid developments in science and technology (S&T), such as artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, and advanced materials, are transforming virtually every sector of society, including healthcare, transportation, communication, defense, agriculture, and commerce. These developments bring opportunities for economic growth and improved quality of life, but increase the potential for unintended consequences. Federal agencies provide crucial but highly decentralized support for wide-ranging S&T activities through policies and programs that conduct research and development, protect intellectual property, regulate the use and stimulate the transfer of technologies for commercialization, and enable U.S. competitiveness in advanced manufacturing. These federal activities have the potential to either propel or be impacted by the rapid S&T developments. GAO's work will continue to help the Congress navigate the increasingly complex technologies it must oversee through, for example, technology assessments on topics including rapid vaccine development, AI, and quantum computing. Furthermore, GAO evaluations of federal research and development efforts and other S&T issues will help the Congress more effectively harness the power of the federal S&T enterprise to ensure the United States remains innovative and globally competitive.

3.4.1. Emerging Issues

Identify, analyze, and assess emerging science and technology issues through technology assessments to enhance congressional knowledge and understanding, including policy implications

3.4.2. Investment, IP, Competitiveness & Innovation

Assess the management and results of federal investment in science and technology, and the effectiveness of efforts to protect intellectual property and foster global competitiveness and innovation

3.4.3. Evaluation

Identify and support utilization of best practices and frameworks for evaluating research and development and science and technology projects

4. Quality, Timeliness & Leading Practices

Maximize the Value of the GAO by Enabling Quality, Timely Service to the Congress and by Being a Leading Practice Federal Agency

4.1. Workforce

Ensure that our workforce is aligned to achieve our mission

Empower GAO's Diverse Workforce to Continue to Excel in Mission Delivery through Strategic Talent Management ~ As a knowledge-based organization, GAO recognizes that our greatest strength lies with our people. In maintaining and renewing that strength, GAO will continue to attract, develop, and retain a diverse, inclusive, and highly productive workforce using a strategic talent management approach and the agency's commitment to a workplace where people are valued, respected, and treated fairly. This approach will help us continue to achieve operational excellence in mission delivery, maintain GAO as a model supreme audit institution, and provide the greatest return on investment to the Congress and the American people. GAO will continue to undertake a number of efforts that leverage the agency's expertise and networks to achieve goals. GAO will ensure that its workforce is aligned to achieve its mission, while providing training and developmental programs to meet future challenges. GAO will also leverage data to strengthen learning, knowledge sharing, and growth opportunities that increase the skills and competencies of GAO's diverse workforce, and best position them to address complex, interdisciplinary, and global issues facing the federal government.

4.1.1. Skills, Diversity & Multidisciplinarity

Identify, attract, and retain a diverse and multidisciplinary workforce with the skills necessary to achieve operational excellence

4.1.2. Training & Development

Provide training and development programs that enhance employee multidisciplinary skills and support mission delivery

4.1.3. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

Enhance and sustain a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility that provides opportunities for all employees to excel

4.2. Foresight & Strategic Planning

Enhance our foresight and strategic planning capabilities

Refine GAO's Processes to Deliver High Quality Results and Products, and Promote Knowledge Sharing, Government Standards, and Strategic Solutions ~ GAO will continue efforts to broaden and strengthen relations with the Congress and improve the effectiveness and quality of our products and services. GAO will explore ways to present work to the Congress that meets a variety of short- and long-term needs, through both traditional engagements and fast turn-around and real-time products. GAO will refine its work processes to ensure consistent, measurable outcomes and improve workflow, internal controls, and management oversight. GAO

will enhance its partnerships with other organizations domestically and internationally to promote professional auditing standards and audit capacity, and provide leadership in strengthening partner organizations' knowledge, agility, and responsiveness. GAO will enhance its foresight and strategic planning capabilities by identifying and responding to evolving trends and emerging issues of national importance.

4.2.1. Relationships

Continue to enhance outreach to broaden and strengthen relationships with the Congress and audited entities

Stakeholder(s):

Congress

Audited Entities

4.2.2. Capacity

Enhance GAO's foresight and strategic planning capacity through the Center for Strategic Foresight and other programs

Stakeholder(s):

Center for Strategic Foresight

4.2.3. Standards

Develop and continually improve government internal control, evaluation, and auditing standards

4.2.4. Information Sharing, Training & Capacity-Building

Enhance information sharing, training, and capacity-building for the domestic and international accountability communities

Stakeholder(s):

Accountability Communities

4.2.5. Continuous Improvement

Leverage data, technology, staff, and process improvement to continually enhance GAO's communication, products, processes, and programs

4.3. Tools and Systems

Provide tools and systems to GAO staff

Provide Modern Integrated Tools and Systems in a Secure, Collaborative, and Flexible Environment ~ To ensure GAO continues to be a responsible steward and leading practices agency, it is critical that GAO provides staff with modern and secure integrated tools and systems necessary for maintaining a client-centric approach while working effectively in a collaborative and flexible environment. GAO must diligently manage costs while also making the infrastructure investments required to sustain operational excellence and address evolving needs. It is essential that the agency's business operations be efficient and effective, and that agency systems support more powerful analytic platforms to inform timely decision-making. GAO will reduce the cost of all operations by streamlining space utilization and leveraging cloud-based technologies.

Stakeholder(s):**GAO Staff****4.3.1. Infrastructure***Ensure a secure, robust, and cost-effective physical and technological infrastructure***4.3.2. Business Processes***Empower staff with collaborative, integrated tools to enhance business processes and increase efficiency***4.3.3. Data & Decision-Making***Enhance tools that integrate crosscutting enterprise data to facilitate more agile, cost-effective, and data-driven decision-making***4.3.4. Collaboration***Enable a dependable, mobile, collaborative environment***Administrative Information****Start Date:** 2021-10-01**End Date:** 2027-09-30**Publication Date:** 2022-03-16**Source:** <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-1sp.pdf>**Submitter:****Given Name:** Owen**Surname:** Ambur**Email:** Owen.Ambur@verizon.net**Phone:****PDF formatted using TopLeaf XML publisher**www.turnkey.com.au