

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-409T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U. S. Senate

## Background

GAO's mission is to support 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. GAO provides nonpartisan, objective, and reliable information to Congress, federal agencies, and to the public. GAO recommends improvements across the full breadth and scope of the federal government's responsibilities.

GAO continues to provide significant levels of service to the Congress. It responded to requests from 97 percent of the standing full committees, and almost 66 percent of the standing subcommittees of the Congress in fiscal year 2015.

GAO issued 688 reports and testified before congressional committees 109 times. Congress used GAO's work in key legislation, including in identifying \$30 billion in offsets or revenue enhancements for the fiscal years 2016 and 2017 budget agreement, and in overseeing and reforming government programs in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bill and numerous authorization bills.

Since fiscal year 2003, GAO's work has resulted in:

- over \$600 billion dollars in financial benefits; and
- over 16,000 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public services, and promote sound management throughout government.

GAO is requesting a fiscal year 2017 appropriation of \$567.8 million to support a staffing level of 3,100 full-time equivalents to rebuild staff capacity, address succession planning, and meet workload needs.

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## FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET REQUEST U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

In fiscal year 2015, GAO's work resulted in an unprecedented return of about \$134 for every dollar invested in GAO, generating an estimated \$74.7 billion in financial benefits. Implementation of GAO's recommendations also led to 1,286 program and operational improvements across the federal government and many important contributions to budget, appropriations and authorization legislation enacted by the Congress.

To address congressional priorities, and fulfill GAO's mission, a talented, diverse, high-performing, knowledgeable workforce is essential. However, a significant proportion of its employees will be retirement eligible by the end of fiscal year 2016, including 42 percent of GAO executive leadership and 25 percent of supervisory analysts.

GAO's fiscal year 2017 budget request of \$567.8 million in appropriated funds provides the resources to enable GAO to continue rebuilding its staff capacity and make critical investments in its information technology (IT) and security program. GAO expects to offset its costs by \$32.4 million in receipts and reimbursements, primarily from financial audits and rental income.

This request provides funds to enable GAO to continue rebuilding its staff capacity to achieve a level of 3,100 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in fiscal year 2017 through a robust, targeted recruitment program. GAO plans to bolster entry-level and intern positions to provide a pipeline to help address succession planning and fill critical skill gaps, which will allow GAO to continue to meet the highest congressional priorities and produce financial benefits. GAO also plans to continue addressing succession planning needs through other human capital activities, such as training and development.

These efforts will help ensure that GAO is able to recruit and retain a talented, diverse workforce and make progress towards an optimal staffing level of 3,250 FTEs.

GAO also plans to make critical investments in its infrastructure operations, by modernizing GAO's aged IT infrastructure in such areas as security, telecommunications, information management systems, and software and hardware, to help improve engagement efficiency, increase staff productivity, enhance access to information, and help reduce operating costs.

GAO has again been recognized as an employer of choice. In December 2015, the Partnership for Public Service ranked GAO as one of the best places to work in the federal government. GAO is also ranked number one for its support of diversity, a position GAO has held since 2011.

Additional information on the results of GAO's operations, and the financial and operational benefits resulting from its work, are provided in more detail in GAO's Fiscal Year 2015 Performance and Accountability Report.