

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106501](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

DOJ's transition to JustGrants delayed some of the department's approximately \$4.3 billion in grants and cooperative agreements in fiscal year 2021, according to the DOJ Office of the Inspector General.

GAO was asked to examine users' challenges with the transition to JustGrants. This report (1) describes the challenges of external users, including tribal grantees, and the steps DOJ took to address them; and (2) assesses the extent to which DOJ's engagement with external users aligned with leading practices of organizational change management.

GAO analyzed data on user inquiries to the JustGrants help desk in fiscal years 2021 through 2023 and reviewed documents related to tribal consultations. GAO interviewed (1) DOJ officials, (2) officials from a nongeneralizable selection of four Tribes and one tribal organization, and (3) two training and technical assistance providers. GAO also assessed DOJ's alignment with leading practices for organizational change management by reviewing DOJ documents.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations to DOJ, including that OJP should establish and document an approach to ensure that future organizational change management programs related to grants management develop quantifiable and intermediate performance goals. DOJ concurred with all three recommendations.

View [GAO-24-106501](#). For more information, contact Gretta L. Goodwin at (202) 512-8777 or [GoodwinG@gao.gov](mailto:GoodwinG@gao.gov).

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## DOJ GRANTS MANAGEMENT

### Further Steps Could Improve Efforts Taken to Address Early Grants IT Modernization Challenges

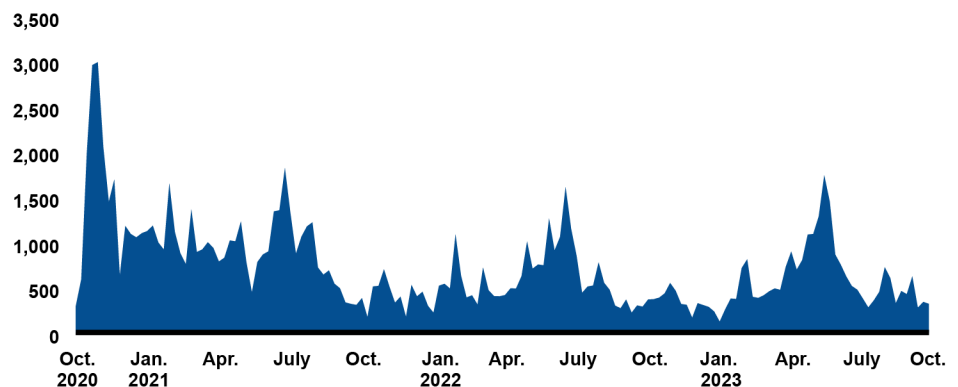
## What GAO Found

In October 2020, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) within the Department of Justice (DOJ) launched a new grants management system, known as the Justice Grants System (JustGrants), to modernize grants management for all of DOJ's grantmaking components: OJP, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

JustGrants launched with features needed to support basic functionality, though many features did not perform as expected. For example, some grant recipients could not submit financial or programmatic reports, which are used to report expenditures and grant progress. OJP's help desk, which provides technical and other support to JustGrants users, received about 56,000 inquiries from external users in fiscal year 2021. This included nearly 10,000 inquiries in the first 4 weeks after JustGrants launched. Tribal grantees and applicants reported proportionally about the same number of issues as other users in most categories. These issues included navigation challenges, technical glitches, and funding delays.

Since October 2020, OJP has worked to develop technical features and fixes to increase the functionality of the system and reduce issues. OJP officials stated that they have continued to educate external users to improve their ability to use JustGrants. Inquiries to the help desk decreased by 48 percent from fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and continued at a similar level in fiscal year 2023 (see figure).

**External Users' Inquiries to the JustGrants Help Desk by Week, October 2020 through September 2023**  
Total number



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Justice data. | GAO-24-106501

Prior to implementing JustGrants, OJP adopted an organizational change management approach to facilitate users' transition to JustGrants and shared systems. GAO found that OJP's engagement with external users fully aligned with five of the seven leading practices. GAO also found that OJP's activities partially aligned with two of the seven leading practices. For example, although OJP collected performance data on the transition to JustGrants, it did not establish quantifiable and intermediate performance goals. Tracking the transition to JustGrants using such performance goals would have allowed OJP to make necessary adjustments during the change management process.