

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106764](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, Committee on Oversight and Accountability, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

21st Century IDEA was intended to improve public-facing federal digital services. The act required agencies to submit five annual reports between December 2019 and December 2023 that discussed their implementation of website and digital service modernization requirements.

GAO was asked to review agencies' progress toward meeting the requirements in 21st Century IDEA. GAO's objectives were to (1) determine the reported status of agencies' efforts to comply with key website and digital service modernization provisions in the act and (2) describe the actions taken to comply with the act by selected federal entities that provide or fund high-impact customer-facing services.

To do so, GAO assessed the 24 CFO Act agencies' annual 21st Century IDEA reports, with a particular focus on the reports due in 2022 and 2023. GAO also chose four entities providing high-impact services to the public and examined the ways they were working to meet the act's requirements. GAO also interviewed knowledgeable agency officials and OMB staff.

The Department of Defense concurred with the report. OMB and six of the 24 agencies provided clarifying comments which GAO incorporated as appropriate; these agencies did not indicate agreement or disagreement with the results of the report. Of the remaining 17 agencies, 16 stated they had no comments, and one did not respond.

View [GAO-24-106764](#). For more information, contact Carol C. Harris at (202) 512-4456 or harriscc@gao.gov.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

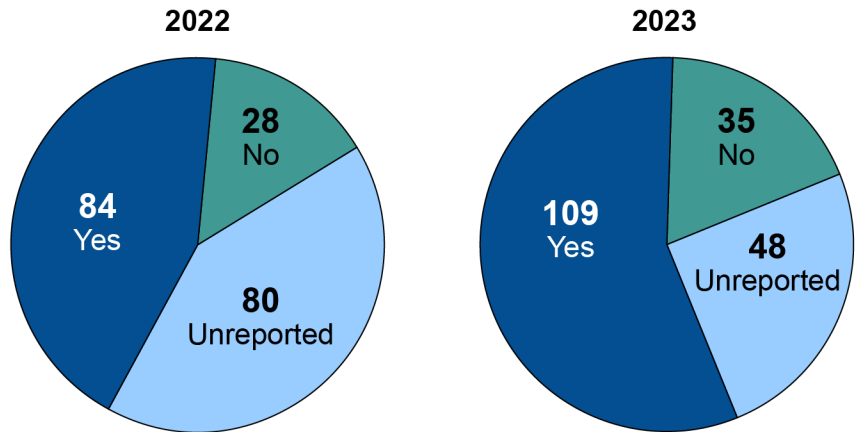
Agency Compliance with Statutory Requirements

What GAO Found

The *21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act* (21st Century IDEA) required federal websites and digital services to be accessible, consistent, not duplicative, searchable, encrypted (secured connections), user data-driven (designed around user needs), customizable, and mobile-friendly. Reports submitted in 2022 and 2023 by the 24 *Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990* (CFO Act) agencies did not consistently address the implementation of these eight modernization requirements. Of the 192 requirements that the 24 agencies were to report on each year, the agencies addressed 84 in 2022 and 109 in 2023. The remaining requirements were either not addressed in the reports (i.e., progress was not explicitly mentioned) or unreported due to missing reports.

Number of Addressed Annual 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act Report Requirements in the 24 Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 Agencies' 2022 and 2023 Reports

Number of Annual Report Requirements Addressed



Source: GAO analysis of agencies' 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act reports. | GAO-24-106764

Of the 18 agencies that submitted 2023 annual reports, seven addressed all eight requirements. The remaining 11 did not address all eight, including one agency that did not address any, one agency that addressed three, and two agencies that addressed four requirements. Six agencies did not submit 2023 reports; consequently, their progress was unknown.

Overall, the 24 CFO Act agencies submitted 84 (or 70 percent) of the 120 total required annual reports due between December 2019 and December 2023, when the reporting requirement sunsetted. Further, the reports had varying levels of content and detail. The lack of reporting guidance contributed to the inconsistent reporting, as agencies were allowed to interpret compliance differently throughout the reporting period.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance in September 2023 that clarified compliance with the modernization requirements by describing a number of actions that agencies should perform. Continued oversight consistent with this guidance would likely provide an assessment of the extent of progress towards delivering better digital services to the public.