

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106919](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

The federal government spends about \$8 billion a year to operate, maintain, and lease office space. The pandemic changed how often employees use this office space, making some space underused. In response to increased telework and underuse of space, GSA launched a federal coworking pilot.

GAO was asked to review GSA's federal coworking efforts. This report examines (1) how GSA identified and addressed agencies' coworking needs, (2) the extent to which the pilot design follows leading practices, and (3) the opportunities and challenges of federal coworking and actions GSA took in response.

GAO reviewed relevant GSA documents and data and evaluated them against GAO leading practices for pilot design and key practices for managing and assessing the results of federal efforts. GAO also interviewed GSA officials and selected regional managers, federal coworking users, and agency decision-makers.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations to GSA on federal coworking: (1) improve the quality of the pilot's usage data, (2) develop criteria for scaling the pilot, and (3) develop a system for tracking cost and space savings. GSA agreed with the recommendations and stated that it will create a plan to address them and has made progress in completing some actions.

View [GAO-24-106919](#). For more information, contact Dave Marroni at (202) 512-2834 or [marronid@gao.gov](mailto:marronid@gao.gov).

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## FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY






### Actions Needed to Better Assess Office Sharing Pilot's Broader Applicability

## What GAO Found

In July 2023, the General Services Administration (GSA) launched a pilot to examine federal office sharing (also referred to as coworking). The pilot allows agencies to access shared office space in six federally owned or leased buildings across the country. In developing the pilot, GSA used surveys and focus groups to identify agencies' coworking needs. The coworking locations have Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, private workspaces, kitchens, and proximity to public transportation—features identified as important by agencies. Per GSA's data, through August 1, 2024, at least 924 users, from 59 federal entities, have visited federal coworking spaces at least 1,839 times.

GSA's coworking pilot fully aligns with three of GAO's leading practices for effective pilot program design but does not fully align with the remaining two practices (see figure). GSA established measurable objectives, communicated with key stakeholders, and developed an evaluation plan. However, collecting more accurate data on the use of coworking spaces would improve GSA's ability to develop conclusions regarding the pilot program and justify investing additional resources. In addition, developing criteria that would inform decisions on scalability and whether to integrate the pilot activities more broadly would enable GSA to assess whether a coworking service would succeed in a non-pilot setting.

#### Alignment of GSA Federal Coworking Pilot Program with GAO Leading Practices for Pilot Program Design

Leading practice	Description of GSA actions	Alignment
<b>Measurable objectives</b>	GSA established measurable objectives for the pilot, including identifying potential users and uses for federal coworking.	 Aligns
<b>Stakeholder communication</b>	GSA established regular communication with key stakeholders, including agency decision-makers and potential users.	 Aligns
<b>Assessment methodology</b>	GSA developed an assessment methodology that includes collecting and analyzing data on user satisfaction with coworking spaces, but it may not be capturing all coworking users.	 Partially aligns
<b>Evaluation plan</b>	GSA has outlined how it collects and analyzes data to evaluate the coworking pilot's implementation and performance.	 Aligns
<b>Scalability criteria</b>	GSA officials said they may expand the pilot to new locations based on interest from federal agencies, but have not defined what would constitute sufficient interest. In addition, GSA has not developed criteria that would inform decisions on scalability and whether to integrate the pilot activities more broadly into GSA's overall efforts.	 Does not align

Source: GAO analysis of General Services Administration (GSA) information. | GAO-24-106919

GSA has identified opportunities and taken steps to address the challenges of federal coworking. For example, GSA noted that coworking could help agencies achieve cost and space savings by reducing unneeded office space and improving space utilization, but that it will take time for agencies to incorporate coworking into their long-term space planning. About half of GSA's leases will expire in the next 5 years, and GSA officials told GAO that they plan to identify expiring leases near federal coworking spaces to help agencies explore coworking opportunities. However, GSA has not developed a system to track federal coworking's progress against its long-term goal of cost and space savings. Doing so would better position GSA to assess the extent to which federal coworking is meeting its long-term goal as well as demonstrate the value of federal coworking to Congress and agencies.