What we will cover today

What is GAO?
- Mission, authority, and scope of work
- Basis of credibility
- Scope of work

How can you use GAO products and services?
- Cite reports and testimonies
- Tap our experts
- Access content through social media

Request work and other services
GAO’s mission

GAO exists 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.
Among other things, GAO has statutory authority to

▪ ...investigate all matters related to the receipt, disbursement and expenditure of public funds

▪ ...evaluate the results of a program or activity the Government carries out under existing law

See 31 U.S.C. §§ 712, 716 and 717 for GAO’s primary statutory authorities.
Basis of GAO’s credibility

GAO’s work is

- guided by organizational values,
- performed according to applicable professional standards, and
- produced by highly trained staff who often perform field work or original analysis.
GAO’s scope of work

- Evaluations of federal programs and performance
- Financial and management audits
- Policy analyses
- Legal opinions
- Bid protest adjudications
- Investigations
Our written products
Biennial status reports on 35 major government operations that GAO considers high risk because they are vulnerable to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or are in need of broad-based transformation, GAO-19-157SP.
Reports issued 2011-2019 identified over 790 actions to help programs achieve greater efficiencies or become more effective in providing government services.

Our annual reports have helped the federal government save over $260 billion.
Recent examples of GAO’s work

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services could potentially save **hundreds of millions of dollars** by improving how it identifies and targets risk in overseeing Medicaid expenditures to identify and resolve errors.

- The Department of Defense (DOD) could expand its use of intergovernmental agreements to obtain military installation support services—such as waste management and snow removal—and potentially save **millions of dollars annually**.
In fiscal year 2018, GAO witnesses testified at 98 hearings, which covered a wide range of international and national issues.
Tap our expertise

Our staff are organized around areas of expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Expertise</th>
<th>Logo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Research and Methods (ARM)</td>
<td><img src="ARM.png" alt="ARM" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland Security and Justice (HSJ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracting and National Security Acquisitions</td>
<td><img src="CNSA.png" alt="CNSA" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>International Affairs and Trade (IAT)</td>
<td><img src="IAT.png" alt="IAT" /></td>
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<td>Defense Capabilities and Management (DCM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Technology &amp; Cybersecurity (ITC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education, Workforce, and Income Security (EWIS)</td>
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<td>Natural Resources &amp; Environment (NRE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forensic Audits and Investigative Service (FAIS)</td>
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<td>Physical Infrastructure (PI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Management and Assurance (FMA)</td>
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<td>Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA)</td>
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<td>Financial Markets and Community Investment (FMCI)</td>
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<td>Strategic Issues (SI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Team (HC)</td>
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<td>GAO</td>
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Services our experts provide

- Technical assistance
- Witnesses at or support for hearings
- Briefings
- Informal answers to questions
- Advice
Access GAO through social media

Using technology to share GAO’s work with Congress and the American people.
Request GAO work

How are requests made for reports?

▪ Submit requests in writing to the Comptroller General

How does GAO prioritize requests?

▪ Statutorily required studies (mandates)
▪ Requests from senior congressional leaders and chair and ranking members of committees
Members may request in writing that GAO

- conduct an audit or investigation
- add them as co-requesters
- provide a witness to testify

Requests should include

- the nature of the request
- the requesting Member’s signature, title, and committee affiliation
- a staff point of contact
Writing request letters

Requester will be

▪ notified when GAO has accepted the request
▪ contacted by GAO to better understand the requester’s information needs
▪ asked to approve or decline co-requesters
▪ given periodic briefings
▪ provided a draft written product and notified before the product is issued
▪ given the option of restricting products for up to 30 calendar days
Drafting statutorily required studies

- In statute, Congress may include reporting requirements related to work it wants GAO to do.
- It helps GAO if:
  - The time to complete the work is realistic (e.g., 1 – 2 years after enactment);
  - The requirement for GAO is one-time or has an end date; and
  - GAO has authority to do such work, and the statute’s language provides an opportunity to scope the work.
- Just as GAO staff provide input on request letters, they can provide help crafting reporting requirements included in statute.
GAO’s Congressional Protocols (GAO-17-767G) describe:

- the scope of GAO’s audit authority
- criteria GAO considers before accepting requests
- GAO’s commitments to requestors
- GAO’s priorities for initiating work
GAO’s Office of Congressional Relations

Congressional Relations Advisors will help you

- connect with GAO experts
- obtain available products and services
- understand GAO’s protocols and planned work
Contacting GAO

Contact GAO’s Office of Congressional Relations Office for assistance

- call (202) 512-4400
- e-mail congrel@gao.gov
- visit watchdog.gao.gov