

GAO'S WORK ON COVID-19

March 1, 2020 – September 30, 2022

The CARES Act includes a provision for GAO to conduct monitoring and oversight of the federal government's preparedness for, response to, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including issues related to public health, the economy, and federal spending. To fulfill this role, GAO reports periodically on these matters. The act also asks GAO to conduct a review of federal contracting under CARES Act authorities and report annually on programs that provide loans, loan guarantees, and other assistance to companies under the act.

GAO was provided a total of \$107 million to carry out this real-time oversight for the Congress. Of this total, GAO has expended about \$74 million as of September 30, 2022. This document summarizes the key results of this oversight.

For additional information, visit www.gao.gov/coronavirus

180

Products Issued since March 2020

- 10 comprehensive government-wide reports on federal COVID-19 response
- 132 reports on specific aspects of federal response
- 26 congressional testimonies
- 12 science and technology spotlights

368

Recommendations for Agencies & Congress

Spanning 24 agencies and covering public health, service delivery, the economy, and program integrity

Includes 92 new recommendations that GAO made from March 2022 – September 2022

Agencies have partially or fully implemented almost 40 percent of GAO's recommendations as of September 30, 2022

For example, GAO recommended that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) redesign its Quarantine Activity Reporting System (QARS) or deploy a new data system that would allow CDC to more effectively facilitate contact tracing for air passengers and conduct disease surveillance for air travel. CDC agreed with our recommendation.

GAO's work is making a difference. In response to GAO's recommendations, agencies have implemented oversight plans in pandemic relief programs and improved documentation of agencies' processes. For example:

- **The Small Business Administration** developed and implemented plans to identify and respond to risks in the Paycheck Protection Program to ensure program integrity, achieve program effectiveness, and address potential fraud. This recommendation resulted in **\$3.49 billion in financial savings**.
- **The Health Resources and Services Administration** developed detailed protocols and procedures to assess the COVID-19 Claims Reimbursement to Health Care Providers and Facilities for Testing, Treatment, and Vaccine Administration for the Uninsured Program and to identify overpayments for recovery. This process, as outlined in the protocols and procedures, will help ensure timely identification of improper payments, including those resulting from potential fraudulent activity, and help ensure the timely recovery of overpayments.
- **The Occupational Safety and Health Administration** updated its inspection data to reflect whether its COVID-19-related inspections of workplaces were conducted on-site or remotely. These efforts will allow the agency to better identify those inspections conducted remotely, so the agency may conduct any needed follow-up and assess how effectively remote inspections identified hazards.
- **The Federal Bureau of Prisons** created a system to assess facilities' COVID-19 best practices and lessons learned, determine which should be incorporated into policy and guidance, and monitor their application. As a result of these efforts, the Bureau has better assurance that its facilities are actively improving COVID-19-related response efforts when applicable.

ISSUED WORK

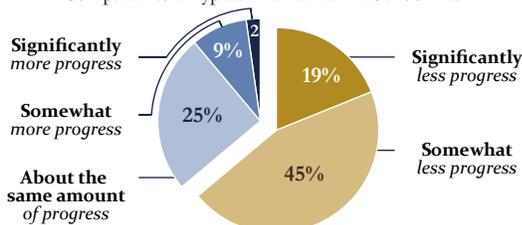
GAO's recently issued work related to COVID-19 includes the following reports:

- COVID-19: Current and Future Federal Preparedness Requires Fixes to Improve Health Data and Address Improper Payments, [GAO-22-105397](#)
- Air Travel and Communicable Diseases: Federal Leadership Needed to Advance Research, [GAO-22-104579](#)

● **Pandemic Learning: Less Academic Progress Overall, Student and Teacher Strain, and Implications for the Future, [GAO-22-105816](#)**

Estimated Percentage of Teachers' Views of the Academic Progress Their Students Made Overall

Public K-12 School Teachers, School Year 2020-21
Compared to a Typical Pre-Pandemic School Year



Source: GAO analysis of survey of K-12 public school teachers. | [GAO-22-105816](#)

- Unemployment Insurance: Pandemic Programs Posed Challenges, and DOL Could Better Address Customer Service and Emergency Planning, [GAO-22-104251](#)
- Public Health Preparedness: COVID-19 Medical Surge Experiences and Related HHS Efforts, [GAO-22-105461](#)

ONGOING WORK

As of October 2022, GAO's 53 ongoing engagements related to COVID-19 includes audits on:

- Department of Health and Human Services' Leadership and Coordination of Public Health Emergencies
- Localities' Use of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

● **Impacts on Aviation Operations**



- Federal Efforts to Address Zoonotic Diseases
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Supply Chain International Trade Issues

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