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HOMELAND SECURITY

Weak Oversight of Human Resources Information Technology Investment Needs Considerable Improvement

Why GAO Did This Study

DHS's human resources information technology environment includes fragmented systems, duplicative and paper-based processes, and little uniformity of data management practices, which according to DHS, are compromising the department's ability to effectively carry out its mission. DHS initiated HRIT in 2003 to consolidate, integrate, and modernize DHS's human resources information technology infrastructure. In 2011, DHS redefined HRIT's scope and implementation time frames.

This statement summarizes GAO's report that is being released at today's hearing (GAO-16-253) on, among other objectives, the progress DHS has made in implementing the HRIT investment and how effectively it managed the investment.

What GAO Recommends

In its report that is being released today, GAO made 14 recommendations to DHS to, among other things, address HRIT's poor progress and ineffective management. For example, GAO recommended that the HRIT executive steering committee be consistently involved in overseeing and advising the investment, and that DHS establish time frames for re-evaluating HRIT and develop a complete life-cycle cost estimate for the investment. DHS concurred with the 14 recommendations and provided estimated completion dates for implementing each of them.

What GAO Found

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has made very little progress in implementing its Human Resources Information Technology (HRIT) investment over the last several years. This investment includes 15 improvement areas; as of November 2015, DHS had fully implemented only 1.

Status and Planned Completion Dates for Implementing the 15 Strategic Improvement Areas, as of November 2015

Strategic improvement area	Status	Original planned completion[a]	Current expected completion date
1. Data management and sharing	◑	September 2014	Unknown
2. Performance measures tracking and reporting	○	December 2012	Unknown
3. Personnel action processing	◑	September 2013	Unknown
4. Human resources document management	◑	September 2014	Unknown
5. End-to-end hiring	○	December 2016	Unknown
6. Performance management	◑	December 2012	Unknown
7. Off-boarding process	○	December 2012	Unknown
8. Policy issuances and clarification	○	June 2015	Unknown
9. Payroll action processing	◑	June 2014	Unknown
10. HRIT deployment process	○	September 2012	Unknown
11. Knowledge management	○	December 2014	Unknown
12. Training	○	June 2015	Unknown
13. Communication and collaboration among components	○	December 2012	Unknown
14. On-boarding process	○	December 2012	Unknown
15. HRIT intake process	●	December 2011	Implemented October 2011

Key: ●Fully implemented ◑Partially implemented ○Not yet started

Source: GAO analysis of data provided by DHS officials. | GAO-16-407T

[a]Dates reflect the last month of the quarter in which the areas were planned to be complete.

HRIT's limited progress was due in part to the lack of involvement of its executive steering committee—the investment's core oversight and advisory body. Specifically, this committee was minimally involved with HRIT, such as meeting only once during a nearly 2-year period when major problems were occurring, including schedule delays and the lack of a life-cycle cost estimate. As a result, key governance activities, such as approval of HRIT's operational plan, were not completed. Officials acknowledge that HRIT should be re-evaluated. They have met to discuss it; however, specific actions and time frames have not yet been determined. Until DHS takes key actions to manage this neglected investment, it is unknown when its human capital management weaknesses will be addressed.

_____ **United States Government Accountability Office**