

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-415](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Secret Service, a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is responsible for protecting the President, the Vice President, and their families, as well as the White House complex. In October 2014, following several security lapses, the Secretary of Homeland Security established the Panel, an independent panel of experts, to review White House security and other aspects of Secret Service operations.

The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018 contains a provision for GAO to report on the progress made by the Secret Service in implementing the Panel's recommendations. This report addresses the extent to which the Secret Service has implemented the recommendations in the Panel's 2014 report. GAO reviewed Secret Service documents, analyzed agency training and labor-distribution data from fiscal years 2014 through 2018, and interviewed agency officials and Panel members.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to the Secret Service: (1) develop and implement a plan to ensure that special agents assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions reach annual training targets, and (2) develop and implement a policy that documents the process for collecting complete and appropriate data on Uniformed Division officer training. DHS concurred with the two recommendations.

View [GAO-19-415](#). For more information, contact Nathan Anderson at (202) 512-3841 or AndersonN@gao.gov.

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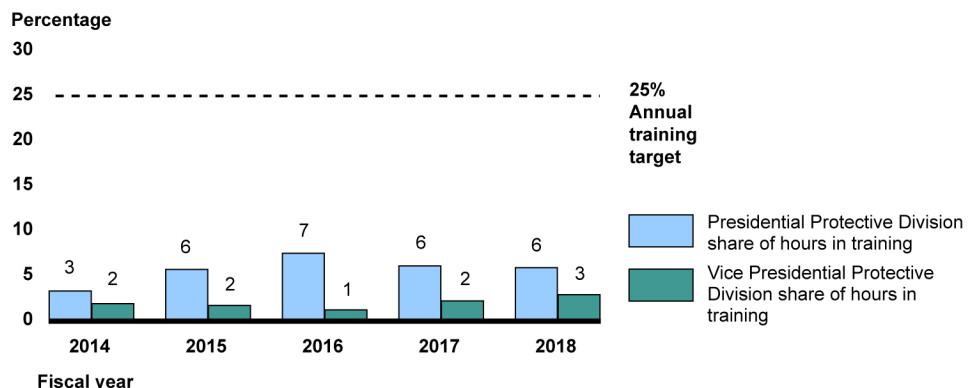
Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations

What GAO Found

The U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service) has made progress implementing the 19 recommendations related to training and personnel; technology, perimeter security, and operations; and leadership made by the U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (Panel). The Secret Service fully implemented 11 of the recommendations. For example, the agency increased the number of agents and officers in the divisions that protect the President and White House and secured approval to build a new fence around the White House complex.

The Secret Service is in the process of implementing the remaining eight recommendations. The Panel found that the security incident of September 19, 2014, when an intruder jumped the north fence and entered the White House, arose from a "catastrophic failure of training." The Panel recommended, and the Secret Service agreed, that the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions train for 25 percent of their work time. However, the Secret Service has not met this target and lacks a plan for achieving it. In fiscal year 2018, special agents assigned to these divisions trained for about 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of their regular work hours (see figure). In commenting on a draft of this report in May 2019, the Secret Service stated that it no longer agrees with the training target and plans to reevaluate it. Developing and implementing a plan for ensuring that the established training target is met given current and planned staffing levels would better ensure that agents assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions are prepared to carry out Secret Service's protection priority.

Share of Regular Work Hours Special Agents Assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions Spent in Training, Fiscal Years 2014–2018



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service data. | GAO-19-415

In addition, the Secret Service does not have a policy with a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate (i.e., protection-related) training hour data for Uniformed Division officers. Implementing such a policy will better position the Secret Service to assess the training data and make informed decisions about whether and how training needs are being met.