



Highlights of [GAO-09-749](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The Federal Protective Service (FPS), as part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for providing security services to about 9,000 federal facilities. In recent years, FPS downsized its workforce from 1,400 to about 1,000 full-time employees. In 2008, GAO expressed concerns about the impact that downsizing had on FPS's mission, and in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 Congress mandated FPS maintain no fewer than 1,200 employees.

GAO was asked to determine the extent to which (1) FPS has hired and trained new staff to address its mandated staffing levels, (2) FPS has developed a strategic human capital plan to manage its current and future workforce needs, and (3) FPS's customers are satisfied with the services it provides. To address these objectives, we reviewed relevant laws and documents, interviewed officials from FPS and other federal agencies, and conducted a generalizable survey of FPS's customers.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that FPS take steps to develop a strategic human capital plan to manage its current and future workforce needs, and clarify its roles and responsibilities to its customers. FPS concurred with our recommendations.

View [GAO-09-749](#) or key components. For more information, contact Mark Goldstein, (202) 512-6670, goldsteinm@gao.gov.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Protective Service Should Improve Human Capital Planning and Better Communicate with Tenants

What GAO Found

FPS did not meet its fiscal year 2008 mandated deadline of increasing its staffing level to no fewer than 1,200 full-time employees by July 31, 2008. This same mandate relating to FPS's staffing was included in DHS's fiscal year 2009 appropriations act. Although FPS currently has over 1,200 employees on board, it did not meet this mandate until April 2009, because of challenges in shifting its priorities from downsizing its workforce to increasing it, inexperience working with DHS's hiring processes, and delays in the candidate screening process. Also, not all of FPS's new law enforcement security officers have completed all required training. According to FPS officials, it expects to have all new hires fully trained by September 2009.

FPS does not have a strategic human capital plan to guide its current and future workforce planning efforts, including effective processes for training, retention, and staff development. Instead, FPS has developed a short-term hiring plan that does not include key human capital principles, such as determining an agency's optimum staffing needs. The lack of a human capital plan has contributed to inconsistent approaches in how FPS regions and headquarters are managing human capital activities. For example, FPS officials in some of the regions GAO visited said they implement their own procedures for managing their workforce, including processes for performance feedback, training, and mentoring. Additionally, FPS does not collect data on its workforce's knowledge, skills, and abilities. These elements are necessary for successful workforce planning activities, such as identifying and filling skill gaps and succession planning. FPS is working on developing and implementing a data management system that will provide it with these data, but this system has experienced significant delays and will not be available for use until 2011 at the earliest.

On the basis of GAO's generalizable survey of FPS customers, customers had mixed views about some of the services they pay FPS to provide. Survey results showed that 58 percent were satisfied, 7 percent were dissatisfied, 18 percent were neutral, and 17 percent were not able to comment on FPS's overall services. The survey also showed that many of FPS's customers did not rely on FPS for services. For example, in emergency situations, about 82 percent of FPS's customers primarily rely on other agencies such as local law enforcement, while 18 percent rely on FPS. The survey also suggests that the roles and responsibilities of FPS and its customers are unclear, primarily because on average about one-third of FPS's customers, i.e., tenant agencies, could not comment on how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with FPS's level of communication on its services, partly because they had little to no interaction with FPS officers. Although FPS plans to implement education and outreach initiatives to improve customer service, it will face challenges because of its lack of complete and accurate contact data. Complete and accurate contact information for its customers is critical for information sharing and an essential component of any customer service initiative.