



Highlights of [GAO-11-554](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Events such as the February 2010 attack on the Internal Revenue Service offices in Texas, and the shooting in the lobby of the Nevada federal courthouse, demonstrate the vulnerabilities of federal facilities and the safety of the federal employees who occupy them. The Federal Protective Service (FPS) is the primary agency responsible for the security of over 9,000 federal government facilities across the country. The fiscal year 2010 DHS appropriations act transferred FPS from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This report addresses (1) the extent to which the FPS transition has been implemented and any remaining related challenges, and (2) the extent to which the transition will help address previously identified challenges to protecting federal facilities. GAO reviewed the 2009 FPS-NPPD transition plan; agreements between FPS, NPPD, and ICE, and best practices for scheduling and cost estimating; and interviewed DHS officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DHS improve the schedule for transferring IT services to reflect scheduling best practices, and update the IT transition cost estimate, in accordance with cost-estimating best practices. DHS concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-11-554](#) or key components. For more information, contact David C. Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or maurerd@gao.gov.

July 2011

FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Progress Made but Improved Schedule and Cost Estimate Needed to Complete Transition

What GAO Found

Since October 2009, FPS's facility protection mission and 13 of 18 mission-support functions have transferred from ICE to NPPD; however, the transition schedule for the 5 remaining mission-support functions has been delayed. For example, while functions such as human capital and budget formulation have been transferred, information technology (IT) services, business continuity and emergency preparedness, facilities, personnel security, and equal employment opportunity have not. In August 2009, DHS reported to Congress that the transition of these functions would be completed by October 2010. DHS now reports that it plans to complete the transfer of 4 of the 5 remaining mission-support functions by September or October 2011, and estimates that the transfer of IT services will not be complete until October 2012. DHS developed a transition plan to guide the planning and execution of the transfer. Among other things, the plan called for schedules with detailed tasks and end dates to be developed for all mission-support functions to ensure critical path activities were identified, managed, and resourced. DHS also developed a detailed schedule to manage the transfer of IT services, as called for in the transition plan. However, GAO's analysis of the schedule found that it did not reflect GAO's best practices for scheduling such as capturing, sequencing, and assigning resources to all activities necessary to accomplish the work. When a schedule does not accurately reflect the project, it will not serve as an appropriate basis for analysis and may result in unreliable completion dates and delays. As of May 2011, DHS estimated that it would cost \$6.2 million to complete the IT transition. GAO's analysis of this cost estimate found it did not meet all the characteristics of a reliable cost estimate. For example, the estimate was not well documented because it was not supported by detailed explanation describing how the estimate was derived and did not include sufficient detail so that GAO could corroborate it. By incorporating cost estimation best practices for the IT transition cost estimate, DHS could enhance the estimate's reliability and better inform decisions about the cost to complete the transition.

The transfer of FPS to NPPD could provide DHS the opportunity to better advance progress towards addressing FPS's challenges to protecting federal facilities that have been previously identified by GAO. Since 2007, GAO has reported that FPS faces significant challenges with protecting federal facilities. The transition plan noted that the transfer of FPS to NPPD would improve the mission effectiveness of both agencies. NPPD officials explained that the agency has undertaken actions that serve as a foundation for integrating FPS into NPPD. For example, FPS has begun to develop a new strategic plan to align FPS's activities and resources to support NPPD mission-related outcomes. Additionally, NPPD is assisting FPS in developing a human capital strategic plan, as recommended by GAO in July 2009. These steps are encouraging, but it is too early to tell if these planned actions will help address challenges previously identified by GAO.