



Highlights of [GAO-06-304](#), a report to the congressional committees.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CAMPAIGNS

Activities and Financial Obligations for Seven Federal Departments

Why GAO Did This Study

Government-sponsored public service announcement (PSA) campaigns are prepackaged messages generally placed for free through various media to promote designated government activities, programs, or services. Although PSAs may be placed for free, PSA campaigns may still incur financial obligations for production.

GAO was mandated to provide information about federal PSA campaign activities by a House Appropriations Committee report (House Report No. 108-671). GAO received detailed information on PSA campaigns for the seven federal departments with the highest obligations for public relations and advertising in fiscal year 2003—Commerce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Interior, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs—as reported in a governmentwide federal procurement data system.

GAO submitted questionnaires to these seven departments to obtain information for fiscal year 2003 through the second quarter of fiscal year 2005 on (1) obligations incurred for PSA campaigns, including whether obligations were incurred externally, such as through a contract, or internally; (2) the purpose, audience, and type of media employed; and (3) whether campaigns were evaluated for success and their results published in performance reports, including Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) reports.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-304.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Paul Jones at (202) 512-8777, or jonespl@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

The seven departments we surveyed identified a total of 105 PSA campaigns that incurred obligations from fiscal year 2003 through the first two quarters of fiscal year 2005 (see fig. below). The incurred obligations totaled approximately \$152 million (approximately \$143 million in obligations incurred externally and approximately \$9 million in obligations incurred internally). The purposes and goals of these PSA campaigns ranged widely, from increasing military recruitment to improving the health and welfare of the American public, to enhancing the safety of outdoor recreational and sporting activities. The target audiences ranged from the general public to residents in particular states, to participants in specific programs or activities. The types of media used for the PSA campaigns were, in order of frequency, radio, television, Internet, newspapers, magazines, outdoor billboards, and other media, such as brochures, posters, and phonebooks. As to whether PSA campaigns were evaluated, the departments reported that 47 of the 105 campaigns were evaluated to determine if campaign goals had been achieved. Of these, 41 campaigns were reported to be successful; results were not reported for the remaining 6.

Relevant agencies reviewed a draft of this report and generally concurred with GAO's findings; technical comments were incorporated as appropriate.

Obligations Incurred by Seven Federal Departments for Public Service Announcement Campaigns for Fiscal Year 2003 through March 31, 2005

Number of PSA campaigns	Type of obligation	Amount of obligation
105	External ^a	\$142,578,645
	Internal ^b	\$9,323,606
	Total	\$151,902,251

Source: GAO analysis of data submitted by departments.

^aObligations incurred through a contract or other financial arrangement with a firm or organization outside of the sponsoring federal department.

^bObligations incurred through work done internally within an organizational unit within the sponsoring federal department.