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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-08-45](#), a report to congressional subcommittees

Why GAO Did This Study

As required by Congress, the U.S. Postal Service (Service) has issued three fundraising stamps—also called semipostals—which are sold at a higher price than First-Class stamps, with the difference distributed to designated federal agencies for specific causes. The proceeds from the three stamps are to fund breast cancer research, assistance to families of emergency relief personnel killed or permanently disabled in the terrorist attacks of September 11, and services to children exposed to domestic violence. Of the three stamps, the Breast Cancer Research stamp is the only semipostal currently being sold.

GAO has issued three prior reports on semipostals. To provide Congress updated information, GAO examined (1) the amount of money that has been raised through the sale of semipostals, and (2) how the designated federal agencies have used the proceeds and reported the results.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is reaffirming one of its prior recommendations that HHS annually report to Congress on the NIH's use of Breast Cancer Research stamp proceeds. The Service, ACF, DOD, NIH and FEMA did not provide overall comments but they did provide technical comments, which were incorporated as appropriate.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-45](#). For more information, contact Katherine A. Siggerud at (202) 512-2834 or siggerudk@gao.gov.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Agencies Distribute Fund-raising Stamp Proceeds and Improve Reporting

What GAO Found

As of June 2007, more than \$68 million has been raised through semipostal sales. Of the three semipostals, the Breast Cancer Research stamp had proceeds totaling approximately \$54.6 million, the Heroes of 2001 stamp had proceeds totaling about \$10.6 million, and the Stop Family Violence stamp had proceeds totaling about \$3.2 million. The authorized sale period for each semipostal affected the funds raised. In discussions with relevant agencies, advocacy groups and fund-raising organizations, several factors were identified that affected semipostal sales. These factors include public awareness about the charitable cause that a stamp represents, the stamp's design, and confusion about how the proceeds will be used.

All four of the designated federal agencies have distributed proceeds from their respective semipostals. The Department of Defense (DOD) and NIH continue to award grants and fund programs for research with proceeds from the Breast Cancer Research stamp, and have added new programs to distribute the proceeds. The Administration for Children (ACF) within HHS used the proceeds from the Stop Family Violence stamp to award nine grants to programs that support children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Also, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) recently distributed the last of the proceeds from the Heroes of 2001 stamp to the families of emergency relief personnel who were either killed or permanently disabled while serving in the line of duty in connection with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In September 2005, GAO recommended that the designated federal agencies annually report to Congress on their use of semipostal proceeds. DOD and ACF have submitted reports to Congress, and FEMA plans to report in the near future. NIH does not plan to prepare a report for Congress, but offers information on NIH's use of Breast Cancer Research stamp proceeds on its public website. However, NIH's website did not provide detailed information on proceeds received, how proceeds were used and related achievements.

Fund-raising Stamps: Proceeds Distributed to Designated Agencies



Source: The U.S. Postal Service®.