

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-509](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Given the significance and complexity of the CAP goals, it is important that CAP goal contributors, Congress, and the public are able to track how CAP goal teams are making progress.

This report is one in a series in response to a statutory provision to review GPRAMA implementation. It assesses (1) the extent to which lessons learned from implementing the interim CAP goals were incorporated into the governance of the current CAP goals; (2) the extent to which GPRAMA requirements for reporting on CAP goal progress are included in the selected CAP goal quarterly progress updates; and (3) the initial progress in implementing the selected CAP goals.

GAO selected 7 of the 15 CAP goals to review (Customer Service, Job-Creating Investment, Lab-to-Market, Open Data, People and Culture, Smarter IT Delivery, and STEM Education). GAO assessed those goals' quarterly progress updates against relevant GPRAMA requirements, reviewed OMB and PIC guidance to CAP goal teams, and interviewed OMB, PIC, and CAP goal staff.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that OMB, working with the PIC, report on Performance.gov the actions that CAP goal teams are taking to develop performance measures and quarterly targets. OMB staff generally agreed with GAO's recommendation and provided technical clarifications, which GAO incorporated as appropriate.

View [GAO-16-509](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or [mihmj@gao.gov](mailto:mihmj@gao.gov).

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## MANAGING FOR RESULTS

### OMB Improved Implementation of Cross-Agency Priority Goals, But Could Be More Transparent About Measuring Progress

## What GAO Found

The GPRAMA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to coordinate with agencies to develop cross-agency priority (CAP) goals, which are 4-year outcome-oriented goals covering a number of complex or high-risk management and mission issues.

### Examples of CAP goals and goal statements

	<b>Customer Service</b> Increase citizen satisfaction and promote positive experiences with the federal government.		<b>Job-Creating Investment</b> Encourage foreign direct investment by improving federal investment tools and resources, while also increasing interagency coordination.
	<b>Open Data</b> Improve government efficiency and effectiveness by unlocking the value of government data.		<b>People &amp; Culture</b> Innovate by unlocking the full potential of the workforce we have today and building the workforce we need for tomorrow.

Source: Performance.gov. | GAO-16-509

For the current set of CAP goals covering the period from 2014-2018, OMB and the interagency Performance Improvement Council (PIC) incorporated lessons learned from the 2012-2014 interim CAP goal period to improve the governance and implementation of these cross-cutting goals. For example, OMB and the PIC changed the CAP goal governance structure to include agency leaders, and holds regular senior-level reviews on CAP goal progress. They also provide ongoing assistance to CAP goal teams, such as by helping teams develop milestones and performance measures. Based in part on prior GAO recommendations, OMB and the PIC updated its guidance to assist CAP goal teams in managing the goals and in meeting GPRAMA reporting requirements. CAP goal teams told GAO that the CAP goal designation increased leadership attention and improved interagency collaboration on these issues.

GAO's assessment of the selected CAP goals' quarterly progress updates—published on Performance.gov—determined that CAP goal teams are meeting a number of GPRAMA reporting requirements, including identifying contributors, reporting strategies for performance improvement and quarterly results. However, most of the selected CAP goal teams have not established quarterly targets as required by GPRAMA, but are consistently reporting the status of quarterly milestones to track goal progress.

GAO found that the selected goal teams are aligning their quarterly milestones with strategies to achieve the desired goal outcomes. Further, all of the selected CAP goal teams reported that they are working to develop performance measures, and are at various stages of the process. However, the selected CAP goal teams were not consistently reporting on their efforts to develop performance measures. Given OMB, the PIC, and CAP goal teams' emphasis on developing measures that are relevant and well-defined, greater transparency is needed to track goal team's efforts on a quarterly basis. With improved performance information the CAP goal teams will be better positioned to demonstrate goal progress at the end of the 4-year goal period.