

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-17-471T](#), a testimony before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

In fiscal year 2016, DOJ's \$29 billion budget funded a broad array of national security, law enforcement, and criminal justice system activities. GAO has examined a number of key programs where DOJ has sole responsibility or works with other departments, and recommended actions to improve program efficiency and resource management.

This statement summarizes findings and recommendations from recent GAO reports that address DOJ's (1) law enforcement activities, (2) custody and care of federal prisoners and inmates, (3) grant management and administration, and (4) use of alternative sources of funding.

This statement is based on prior GAO products issued from February 2012 to November 2016, along with selected updates obtained as of March 2017. For the selected updates on DOJ's progress in implementing GAO recommendations, GAO analyzed information provided by DOJ officials on actions taken and planned.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has made several recommendations to DOJ in prior reports to help improve program efficiency and resource management. DOJ generally concurred with most of these recommendations and has implemented or begun taking action to address them.

View [GAO-17-471T](#). For more information, contact Diana Maurer at (202) 512-8777 or maurerd@gao.gov.

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Continued Actions Needed to Enhance Program Efficiency and Resource Management

What GAO Found

DOJ has not fully addressed most GAO recommendations related to its law enforcement activities. The Department of Justice (DOJ) undertakes a number of activities to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States. Key findings and recommendations from six recent GAO reports include, among other things, that DOJ should: better adhere to policies on collecting firearms data, assess opportunities to more efficiently share information on missing persons, better ensure the privacy and accuracy of face recognition technology, provide more information to entities that handle controlled substances, and improve the handling of whistleblower complaints. Collectively, these reports resulted in 28 recommendations. As of March 2017, DOJ has fully implemented 5 of these recommendations, begun actions to address 11, has not taken actions for 8, and disagreed with 4 recommendations.

DOJ has not fully addressed most GAO recommendations related to the custody and care of federal prisoners and inmates. DOJ is responsible for the custody and care of federal prisoners and inmates, for which the President's Budget requested \$8.8 billion for fiscal year 2017. GAO's recent reports highlight areas for continued improvements in DOJ incarceration and offender management, including better assessing key initiatives to address overcrowding and other federal incarceration challenges, better measuring the outcomes of alternatives to incarceration, improving the management of new prison activations, better estimating cost savings for prisoner operations, and improving notification to tribes about registered sex offenders upon release. Since August 2014, GAO has made 17 recommendations to DOJ in five reports related to these issues, and DOJ generally concurred with them. As of March 2017, DOJ has fully implemented 7 of the recommendations, partially implemented 8, and has not taken actions for 2 recommendations.

DOJ has implemented most GAO recommendations to improve grant administration and management. DOJ supports a range of activities—including policing and victims' assistance—through grants provided to federal, state, local, and tribal agencies, as well as national, community-based, and non-profit organizations. Congress appropriated \$2.4 billion for DOJ grant programs in fiscal year 2016. Four recent GAO reports highlight DOJ's overall grant administration practices, management of specific programs, and efforts to reduce overlap and duplication amongst its grant programs. The four reports include 17 recommendations to DOJ, and the department generally concurred with all of them. As of March 2017, DOJ has fully implemented 15 of the 17 recommendations and partially implemented the remaining two.

DOJ has partially implemented GAO recommendations designed to improve management of funds collected through alternative sources. DOJ has the ability to fund programs using money it collects through alternative sources, such as fines, fees, and penalties in addition to its annual appropriations. For example, in 2015, we reported that DOJ collected \$4.3 billion from seven alternative sources of funding in 2013. This statement highlights three reports that address DOJ's collection, use, and management of these funds. One of the three reports includes three recommendations, which DOJ has partially implemented.