

2011 Interagency Depository Seminar

Government Accountability Office GAO

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GAO's Mission Description

- Independent agency in the legislative branch
- Support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities
- Help improve the federal government's performance and ensure its accountability for the benefit of the American people
- The investigative arm of Congress, aka the "congressional watchdog"



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Brief History of GAO

- July 1, 1921—The Budget and Accounting Act transferred auditing responsibilities, accounting, and claims functions from the Treasury Department to a new agency: The General Accounting Office.
- 2004—Comptroller General David Walker reorganizes and changes the agency name to better reflect the type of work conducted.



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How GAO's Work Supports Congress:

Origins of Work

- Congressional Requests
- Statutes
- Committee and Conference Reports
- Self-initiated (under Comptroller General's authority)

Types of Work

- Reporting on how well government programs and policies are working
- Auditing agency operations
- Investigating allegations of illegal and improper activities
- Issuing legal decisions and opinions, e.g. bid protests and reports on agency rules.

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Types of GAO Products: Reports & Testimonies

- Originally Called “Blue Books”
 - Highlights Page (more recent materials)
 - PDF of full reports
 - E-Reports
 - All unclassified GAO reports are available to the public.
 - Congressional requesters of GAO work are allowed to restrict reports for up to 30 days before public release.
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Types of GAO Products: Legal Decisions & Bid Protests

Decisions and Opinions

- Appropriations
 - Comptroller General Decisions
 - Contract Appeals Board
 - Federal Vacancies Act Resources
 - **Bid Protest Decisions:** A bid protest is a challenge to the award or proposed award of a contract for procurement of goods and services or a challenge to the terms of a solicitation for such a contract. Protests may be filed against procurement actions by federal government agencies.
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Product Classification

Reports & testimonies are numbered by fiscal year. They are also classified by type:

- Unclassified report() GAO-11-760,
- Testimony (T) GAO-11-878T,
- Numbered Correspondence (R) GAO-11-366R,
- Guidance (G) GAO-09-232G,

- Fact Sheets (FS) NSIAD-86-189FS,
- Comptroller General presentation or speech (CG) GAO-07-1267CG,
- Unclassified report, not to be released on the internet (NI) by individual request,

- Special Publication (SP).

Bid Protests are assigned B-Numbers (Unique number assigned by GAO to identify correspondence. Formerly assigned to all audit products with non-unique numbers, historic material may need associated year.)

A protest is identified as, for example, "Protester Name, B-123456."

If related protests are filed, the protests are identified as "Protester Name, B-123456.2," "Protester Name, B-123456.3," etc.

Questions



If you need assistance with a research question...

By phone: Call (202) 512-3000 (Locator) and select Research. Or use (202) 512-4700 to call directly.

By email: Research@gao.gov