

Federal Government Priority Goals

Requirements

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is to coordinate with agencies to develop priority goals for the federal government. At least every 4 years published on the governmentwide performance website concurrently with the President's Budget in the second year of the presidential term OMB is to update or revise the federal government priority goals. 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(1), (2), (5).

These long-term goals are to include

- outcome-oriented goals for a limited number of crosscutting policy areas, and
- goals for management improvements needed across the federal government, including financial management, human capital management, information technology management, procurement and acquisition management, and real property management.

31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(1)(A), (B).

OMB may make adjustments to the goals to reflect significant changes in the federal government's operating environment, with appropriate notification of Congress. 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(2).

When developing or making adjustments to the federal government priority goals, OMB is to consult periodically with Congress, including obtaining majority and minority views from specified Congressional committees:

- the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations;
- the Senate and House Committees on the Budget;
- the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs;
- the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform;
- the Senate Committee on Finance;
- the House Committee on Ways and Means; and
- any other committees determined appropriate.

31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(3).

At least every 2 years, OMB is to consult with the appropriate committees of Congress. 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(4).

The functions and activities related to developing federal government priority goals are considered inherently governmental functions, only to be performed by federal employees. 31 U.S.C. § 1120(c).

Select Legislative History

The Act requires the Director of OMB to work with agencies to develop federal government priority goals that aim to improve performance and management across the federal government. The crosscutting policy goals are required to be outcome-oriented and limited in number to ensure that there is ample focus on achieving these goals over time. The management-related goals should cover management functions where significant improvements are needed across the federal government, such as information technology, human capital, and financial management. Recognizing that achieving the federal government priority goals will require sustained focus over a period of time, the goals are required to be long-term in nature and updated or revised at least every four years. Under the Act, the Director is able to make adjustments to the goals should there be significant changes in the federal government's operating environment. However, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (the Committee) expected that many of these goals would stay constant over time, including across Administrations, since these challenges are not likely to be overcome during a four year period. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 8 (2010).

Successful strategic planning requires the involvement of key stakeholders. This collaboration can serve as a mechanism for building consensus and provides a vehicle for the President to articulate long-term goals and a road map for achieving them. Therefore, when developing or adjusting the goals, and at least once each Congress, the Director is required to consult with key congressional committees and obtain both majority and minority views on the draft goals. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 8 (2010).

The federal government priority goals should complement the federal government performance plan, effectively functioning as a government-wide strategic plan. This legislation also addresses the need to increase transparency by providing a process for developing the federal government priority goals and making them available to the public. The Act requires that the goals be

developed or revised at least once every four years and be made publicly available concurrently with the submission of the budget of the United States Government in the second year of a President's term. At a minimum, the Committee expected the goals would be posted on the government-wide performance website provided for in this legislation. S. Rep. No. 111-372, at 8-9 (2010).

Related GAO Work

GAO has elaborated on and suggested several practices that support this requirement. This includes:

- GAO's comments on the 2012 to 2013 interim federal government priority goals, also known as cross-agency priority goals ([GAO-12-620R](#));
- developing a governmentwide strategic plan to address crosscutting issues ([GAO-04-38](#), pp. 95-96);
- addressing duplication, overlap, and fragmentation ([GAO-13-279SP](#), [GAO-12-342SP](#), pp. 4-5; [GAO-11-617I](#), pp. 3-7; [GAO-11-318SP](#), pp. 3-4; [GAO/AIMD-97-146](#));
- practices to enhance and sustain collaboration ([GAO-06-15](#)); and
- barriers to interagency collaboration and approaches for improving the management of crosscutting programs ([GAO/GGD-00-106](#)).