

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-23-106125](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

In November 2014, in response to a GAO recommendation, DHS reestablished the JRC to develop and lead a component-driven requirements process to inform investment decisions and to reduce unnecessary duplication, overlap, and redundancy. In 2016, GAO found that the JRC's initial management approach was sound but at the time it had not yet completed a process to identify priorities and inform investment decisions.

GAO was asked to review the effectiveness of the JRC's current operations. This report addresses, among other objectives, the extent to which the JRC (1) has designated and validated joint capabilities and requirements; (2) has engaged with DHS leadership; and (3) is positioned to conduct its mission.

GAO reviewed relevant DHS and JRC policies, guidance, and documentation. GAO also interviewed DHS and JRC officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations to DHS, including that it ensures the JRC demonstrates that joint capability documents fully meet key criteria prior to validating them; ensures regular engagement between the JRC and leadership; and reconsiders the placement of the JRC. DHS concurred with all six recommendations, but for two described actions that would not meet their intent as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-23-106125](#). For more information, contact Marie A. Mak at (202) 512-4841 or MakM@gao.gov.

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HOMELAND SECURITY

Joint Requirements Council Needs Leadership Attention to Improve Effectiveness

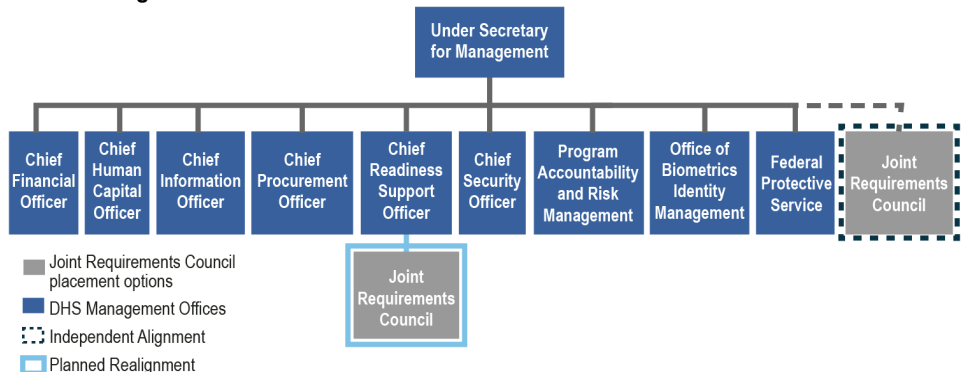
What GAO Found

The Joint Requirements Council (JRC) seeks to create efficiencies by identifying opportunities for components within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop joint capabilities if they have similar mission needs. Since 2018, the JRC has designated five capabilities as joint. However, the JRC validated four of these as joint capabilities even though the documents that components submitted to assess the capability did not fully meet key criteria required in its guidance. For example, three documents partially met the criterion to quantify the capability gap, which helps determine risk associated with not addressing it. Ensuring these documents fully meet criteria better positions DHS to pursue solutions that are well-defined and will meet mission needs.

The JRC was also established to be a recommending body to DHS leadership but leadership has not regularly engaged with the JRC. For example, it did not participate in the review and validation of the joint capabilities that JRC designated for its attention, and it has not met with the JRC since 2015. This limits DHS's ability to fully realize the JRC's strategic value to identify opportunities for joint solutions and help use resources efficiently.

DHS plans to realign the JRC from reporting to the Office of the Secretary to the Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer within the Management Directorate. GAO found that this realignment could limit the JRC's ability to independently oversee the requirements development process because it would not be a separate management function. GAO has reported on the importance of the requirements function to be independent.

Organizational Structure of DHS's Management Directorate and the Joint Requirements Council Realignment



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) documentation. | GAO-23-106125

Further, GAO found that the Office of the Chief Readiness Officer, which oversees department-wide logistics, had the fewest responsibilities in the Management Directorate that aligned with the JRC's mission. The office is also not well-positioned to assist the JRC with overseeing DHS's requirements development process because it is not a principal member of the Council. As a result, this move could limit the JRC's ability to fully execute its roles and responsibilities.