

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-18-484T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

DHS and GSA have been managing efforts to consolidate DHS executive leadership, operational management, and other personnel at one secure headquarters location rather than at multiple locations throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The consolidation is to include the development of multi-billion dollar headquarters facilities at the St. Elizabeths campus in Washington, D.C.

In September 2014, GAO issued a report entitled: Federal Real Property: DHS and GSA Need to Strengthen the Management of DHS Headquarters Consolidation (GAO-14-648). This statement summarizes the key findings and recommendations from this report, and provides a status update as of April 2018 on DHS and GSA implementation of GAO's recommendations.

To complete the September 2014 report, GAO compared DHS and GSA capital planning efforts against applicable leading practices, interviewed officials, and reviewed cost and schedule estimates for the St. Elizabeths project. To assess subsequent DHS and GSA actions to implement GAO's September 2014 recommendations, GAO conducted periodic follow-up with agency officials.

## What GAO Recommends

Among other things, GAO recommended in its September 2014 report that DHS and GSA develop revised DHS headquarters plans that reflect leading practices for capital decision making and also reliable cost and schedule estimates. DHS and GSA concurred with our recommendations.

View [GAO-18-484T](#). For more information, contact Chris Currie at (404) 679-1875 or [curriec@gao.gov](mailto:curriec@gao.gov).

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## FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY

### DHS and GSA Have Not Implemented Recommendations to Strengthen the Management of DHS Headquarters Consolidation

## What GAO Found

In its September 2014 report, GAO found that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and General Services Administration (GSA) planning for the DHS headquarters consolidation at the St. Elizabeths campus in Washington, D.C. did not fully conform with leading capital decision-making practices intended to help agencies effectively plan and procure assets. Specifically, GAO found that DHS and GSA had not conducted a comprehensive assessment of current needs, identified capability gaps, or evaluated and prioritized alternatives that would help officials adapt consolidation plans to changing conditions and address funding issues as reflected in leading practices. GAO recommended that DHS and GSA conduct various assessments and analyses and use the results to inform updated DHS headquarters consolidation plans. The agencies concurred with this recommendation.

In its September 2014 report, GAO also found that DHS and GSA cost and schedule estimates for the headquarters consolidation project at St. Elizabeths did not conform or, only minimally or partially conformed, with leading estimating practices, and were therefore unreliable. Thus, GAO recommended that DHS and GSA develop revised cost and schedule estimates for the remaining portions of the consolidation project in accordance with leading practices, and the agencies concurred with this recommendation.

The DHS Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015, enacted in April 2016 would, according to the accompanying Senate committee report, ensure that DHS and GSA fully address the recommendations from GAO's September 2014 report and provide Congress the information needed to make sound decisions regarding the project. Among other things, the Act required DHS, in coordination with GSA, to submit information to Congress, including various assessments and updated cost and schedule estimates related to the DHS headquarters consolidation. As of April 2018, however, DHS and GSA had not submitted the information to Congress that would either meet the requirements of the Act or address GAO's recommendations. DHS and GSA officials cited funding instability as one challenge to updating consolidation plans and cost and schedule estimates.

Progress of Center Building construction at St. Elizabeths campus from 2016 (left) to 2018 (right)



Source: GAO (left photo); Department of Homeland Security (right photo). | GAO-18-484T