



May 2019

U.S. SECRET SERVICE

Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-415](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Secret Service, a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is responsible for protecting the President, the Vice President, and their families, as well as the White House complex. In October 2014, following several security lapses, the Secretary of Homeland Security established the Panel, an independent panel of experts, to review White House security and other aspects of Secret Service operations.

The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018 contains a provision for GAO to report on the progress made by the Secret Service in implementing the Panel's recommendations. This report addresses the extent to which the Secret Service has implemented the recommendations in the Panel's 2014 report. GAO reviewed Secret Service documents, analyzed agency training and labor-distribution data from fiscal years 2014 through 2018, and interviewed agency officials and Panel members.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to the Secret Service: (1) develop and implement a plan to ensure that special agents assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions reach annual training targets, and (2) develop and implement a policy that documents the process for collecting complete and appropriate data on Uniformed Division officer training. DHS concurred with the two recommendations.

View [GAO-19-415](#). For more information, contact Nathan Anderson at (202) 512-3841 or AndersonN@gao.gov.

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U.S. SECRET SERVICE

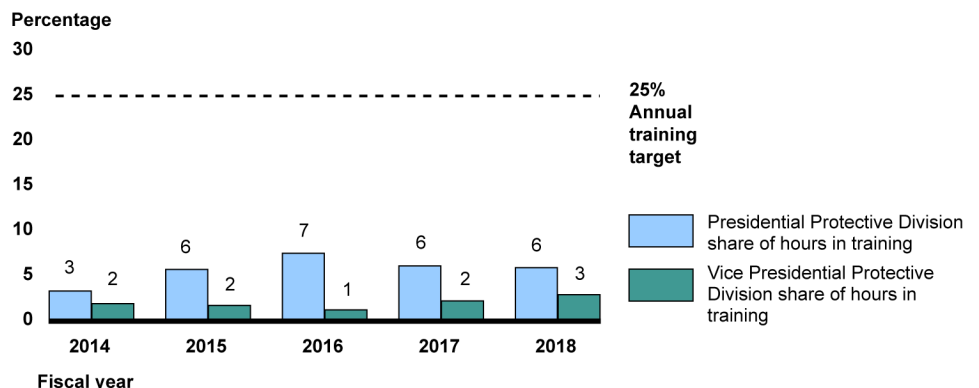
Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations

What GAO Found

The U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service) has made progress implementing the 19 recommendations related to training and personnel; technology, perimeter security, and operations; and leadership made by the U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (Panel). The Secret Service fully implemented 11 of the recommendations. For example, the agency increased the number of agents and officers in the divisions that protect the President and White House and secured approval to build a new fence around the White House complex.

The Secret Service is in the process of implementing the remaining eight recommendations. The Panel found that the security incident of September 19, 2014, when an intruder jumped the north fence and entered the White House, arose from a "catastrophic failure of training." The Panel recommended, and the Secret Service agreed, that the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions train for 25 percent of their work time. However, the Secret Service has not met this target and lacks a plan for achieving it. In fiscal year 2018, special agents assigned to these divisions trained for about 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of their regular work hours (see figure). In commenting on a draft of this report in May 2019, the Secret Service stated that it no longer agrees with the training target and plans to reevaluate it. Developing and implementing a plan for ensuring that the established training target is met given current and planned staffing levels would better ensure that agents assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions are prepared to carry out Secret Service's protection priority.

Share of Regular Work Hours Special Agents Assigned to the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions Spent in Training, Fiscal Years 2014–2018



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service data. | GAO-19-415

In addition, the Secret Service does not have a policy with a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate (i.e., protection-related) training hour data for Uniformed Division officers. Implementing such a policy will better position the Secret Service to assess the training data and make informed decisions about whether and how training needs are being met.

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Abbreviations

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
PALMS	Performance and Learning Management System
PMP	U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel
PPD	Presidential Protective Division
Secret Service	U.S. Secret Service
VPD	Vice Presidential Protective Division

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May 22, 2019

Congressional Committees

On September 19, 2014, an intruder jumped over the north fence of the White House complex, passed several layers of security, evaded U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service) personnel, and entered the White House through the north portico doors. The President was not in the White House at the time; however, this episode highlighted several areas in which the Secret Service needed to improve its performance. The primary responsibility of the Secret Service, a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is to protect the President, the First Family, other national-level leaders, and the White House itself. The September 2014 incident followed several other security lapses involving the Secret Service in recent years, and it prompted the then-Secretary of Homeland Security to establish the U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP), naming four members with expertise in national security, protective security, and leadership of complex organizations.¹

The PMP met with about 50 Secret Service employees, including officials and agency leadership across all levels of seniority; met with representatives from a broad array of organizations, including federal agencies and metropolitan police departments; and reviewed agency documents. The PMP concluded that the September 2014 incident occurred in large part because of a “catastrophic failure in training.” The PMP issued its final report in December 2014, which contained 19 recommendations that addressed three areas: (1) training and personnel; (2) technology, perimeter security, and operations; and (3) leadership. After the report was issued, the Secret Service committed to implementing all of the recommendations.

The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018 contains a provision for us to report on progress made by the Secret Service in implementing the recommendations of the PMP.² This report addresses the extent to which the Secret Service has implemented recommendations in the 2014 PMP report.

¹79 Fed. Reg. 63141 (Oct. 22, 2014).

²Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-160, § 3, 132 Stat. 1246, 1247-48.

To determine the Secret Service's progress, we reviewed the status report that the Secret Service prepared for us in June 2018. We reviewed documents to corroborate what Secret Service officials reported to determine whether and to what extent the stated actions had been taken. Among other planning and implementation documents, we reviewed the Secret Service's strategic plan, human capital strategic plan, training strategic plan, and resource allocation plans. We also interviewed officials and received written responses from various offices across the agency, including the Offices of Protective Operations, Investigations, Training, Technical Development and Mission Support, Strategic Planning and Policy, and Human Resources. To further inform our assessment, we reviewed reports related to recommendations made by the PMP, including a December 2015 House of Representative's Committee on Oversight and Government Reform³ report on four Secret Service security incidents; an October 2016 National Academy of Public Administration report looking at organizational change at the Secret Service;⁴ and a DHS Office of Inspector General report examining Secret Service's actions to address the panel's recommendations.⁵ We compared the progress on each recommendation to what the PMP described in its December 2014 final report. We also interviewed two of the four members of the PMP.⁶ For each recommendation, we determined that either implementation of the recommendation was still in progress or the recommendation was implemented. For recommendations that we consider implemented as of March 2019, we recognize that the Secret Service may need to take further actions to ensure that the new activity or process continues as intended.

We assessed data on agents' time expended from fiscal years 2014 through 2018. Specifically, to determine the share of time that special agents across the agency, including those assigned to the Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and the Vice Presidential Protective Division

³House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *United States Secret Service: An Agency in Crisis*, December 9, 2015.

⁴National Academy of Public Administration, *United States Secret Service: Review of Organizational Change Efforts*, October 31, 2016.

⁵DHS, Office of Inspector General, *The Secret Service Has Taken Action to Address the Recommendations of the Protective Mission Panel*, OIG-17-10 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 10, 2016).

⁶We sought to interview the four members of the PMP. However, only two members were available to speak with us.

(VPD), spent on investigation and protective assignments, training, and other duties, we obtained and analyzed data from the Secret Service's Monthly Activity Reporting System on agents' self-reported time in fiscal years 2014 through 2018. The data describe how many hours each agent (except for members of the Senior Executive Service) reported conducting protection assignments, conducting investigations, or taking part in training, among other things. To determine the share of work hours that special agents assigned to PPD and VPD spent in training, we compared training to regular work hours data from the Monthly Activity Reporting System for each fiscal year 2014 through 2018.⁷ We assessed the reliability of the data from the Monthly Activity Reporting System by reviewing relevant documentation and interviewing knowledgeable Secret Service officials. We determined that these data were sufficiently reliable for our reporting objective. We further assessed actions taken by the Secret Service to implement the Panel's first recommendation—that special agents working on PPD and VPD and Uniformed Division officers meet specified training targets—against leading management practices related to training and human capital efforts⁸ as well as *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* related to using quality information.⁹

We conducted this performance audit from May 2018 to May 2019 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

⁷Regular work-hours exclude Scheduled Overtime and Law Enforcement Availability Pay. Secret Service special agents, as federal criminal investigators, are eligible for Law Enforcement Availability Pay, which is intended to compensate criminal investigators who often work excessive and unusual hours and who work an annual average of two or more unscheduled duty hours per workday.

⁸GAO, *Human Capital: A Guide for Assessing Strategic Training and Development Efforts in the Federal Government*, [GAO-04-546G](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 2004).

⁹Control activities are an integral part of an entity's planning, implementing, reviewing, and accountability for stewardship of government resources and achieving effective results. GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 2014).

Background

Secret Service's Responsibilities and Personnel

The Secret Service's primary responsibility is to physically protect the President, Vice President, their immediate families, and visiting foreign dignitaries as well as the White House complex. The Office of Protective Operations is the principal office responsible for providing protection.¹⁰ Within the Office of Protective Operations, agents may be assigned to a number of divisions, such as PPD, VPD, or one of the other divisions that is responsible for protecting former presidents and visiting heads of state or heads of government.¹¹

The Uniformed Division, which is also part of the Office of Protective Operations, is charged with protecting facilities and venues for Secret Service protectees.¹² Uniformed Division officers control access to the White House complex—which includes the White House itself, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, and the Department of the Treasury building—and the Vice President's residence.

The Secret Service's secondary responsibility is to conduct criminal investigations in areas such as financial crimes, identity theft, counterfeiting of U.S. currency, computer fraud, and computer-based attacks on banking, financial, and telecommunications infrastructure.¹³ Over time, its investigative mission has grown to encompass a wide range of financial and cybercrimes. In addition to investigating financial

¹⁰According to agency officials, the Secret Service leverages support from across the agency to implement protective operations. Those offices include the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support, the Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information, and the Dignitary Protective Division, Special Services Divisions and the Special Operations Division within the Office of Protective Operations.

¹¹Generally, the Secret Service's powers, authorities, and duties, including whom the Secret Service is authorized to protect, are detailed in 18 U.S.C. § 3056. The Secret Service, when directed by the President, is authorized to participate in the planning, coordination, and implementation of security operations at special events of national significance, as determined by the President, which may include presidential inaugurations, international summits held in the United States, major sporting events attended by protected persons, and presidential nominating conventions. Pub. L. No. 106-544, § 3, 114 Stat. 2715, 2716 (Dec. 19, 2000). 18 U.S.C. § 3056(e)(1).

¹²The Secret Service Uniformed Division's powers, authorities, and duties are detailed in 18 U.S.C § 3056A.

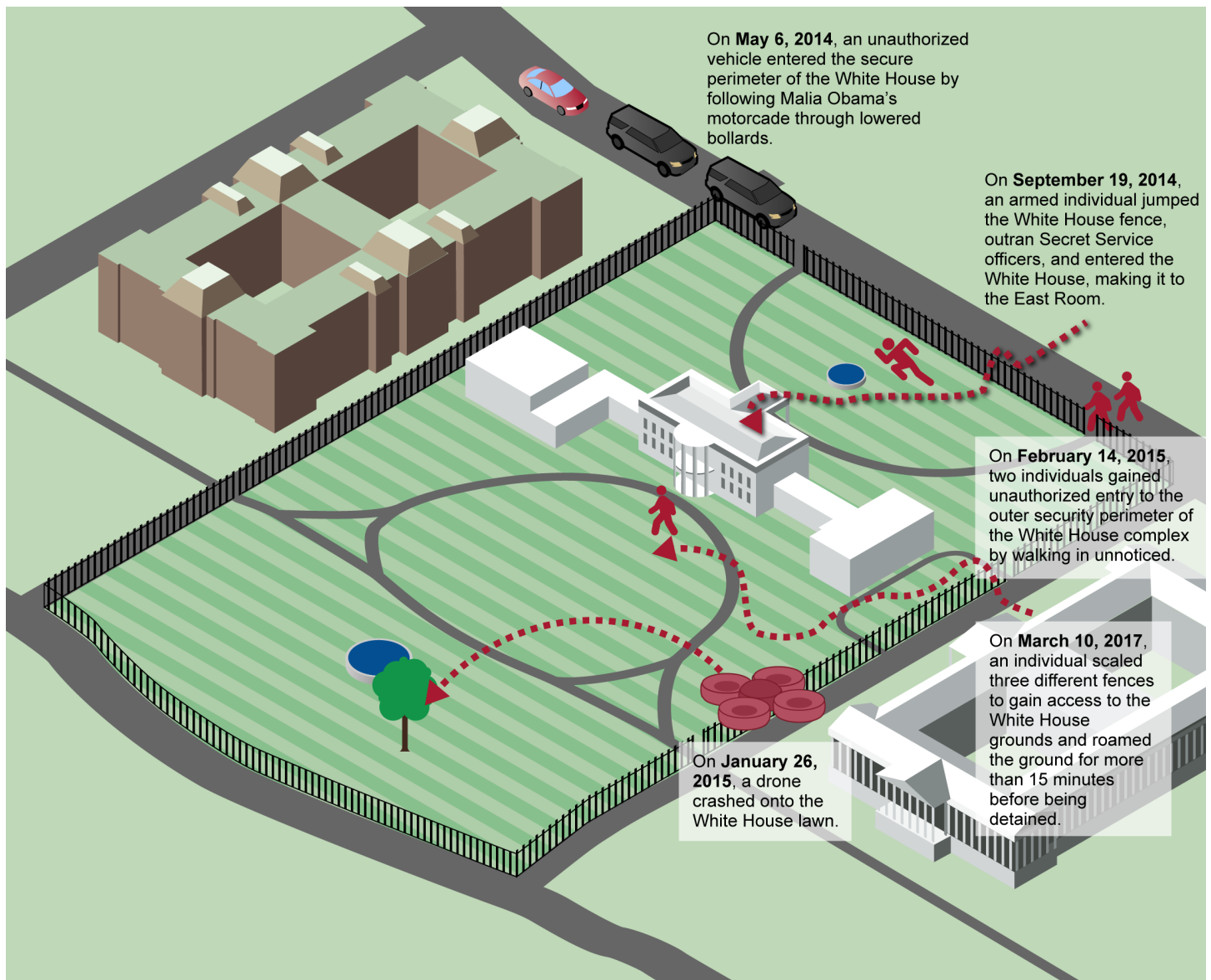
¹³18 U.S.C. § 3056(b).

and electronic crimes, special agents conduct protective intelligence—investigating threats against protected persons, including the President, and protected facilities, such as protectee residences. These activities are conducted through the Office of Investigations, which oversees the agency’s field office structure. Agents assigned to the field offices also support protective operations by, for example, providing physical protection with the assistance of federal, state, and local law enforcement entities when a protectee travels. Because agents are trained to conduct both criminal investigations and to provide protection, agents assigned to investigations in field offices can contribute to protective operations when needed.

Security Incidents Involving the Secret Service Since 2012

The Secret Service has experienced a number of protection-related security incidents on the White House complex since April 2012. Incidents have included attempts to gain access to the White House complex by foot, car, and air. These incidents, among others, highlight some of the many challenges the Secret Service confronts while providing protection. See figure 1 for a description of selected security incidents.

Figure 1: U.S. Secret Service Incidents on the White House Complex Since 2012



Source: GAO analysis of the United States Secret Service: An Agency in Crisis, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, December 9, 2015 and United States Secret Service Press Release, Official Statement: White House Fence Jumper, GPA-09-17, March 17, 2017. | GAO-19-415

**Secret Service Has
Made Progress
Implementing the
Protective Mission
Panel's
Recommendations,
but Recommended
Training Targets Have
Not Been Achieved**

**Secret Service Fully
Implemented Some, But
Not All, of the Panel's
Recommendations**

The PMP's 2014 report made 19 recommendations regarding (1) training and personnel; (2) technology, perimeter security, and operations; and (3) leadership. We found that the Secret Service fully implemented 11 recommendations and is in the process of implementing the remaining eight recommendations. Table 1 summarizes the progress that the agency has made implementing each recommendation. Appendix I provides further details on the actions the Secret Service has taken to address each recommendation.

Table 1: Summary of the U.S. Secret Service’s Implementation of Protective Mission Panel Recommendations

✓	Implemented, ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained	
✍️	Implementation in progress	
U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP) Recommendation	Status	Summary of Actions Taken by the U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service)
<i>Training and personnel</i>		
1. Provide a true “Fourth Shift” for training the Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and Vice Presidential Protective Division (VPD), so that they spend two weeks out of every eight in training, and ensure that Uniformed Division officers are in training for no less than 10 percent of their time.	✍️	The Secret Service instituted a fourth and fifth shift for PPD and a fourth shift for VPD. The fourth shift was created to provide agents with time to participate in training and educational opportunities, conduct advances, and take leave. Implementation is still in progress because neither PPD nor VPD special agents consistently used this time to train and missed the training targets established by this recommendation. In commenting on a draft of this report in May 2019, the Secret Service stated that it no longer agrees with the training target and plans to reevaluate it. The Secret Service does not have a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate Uniformed Division training data that the agency can use to determine whether officers trained for 10 percent of their work hours.
2. Implement integrated training focused on ensuring that all teams at the White House know their roles in responding to specific threats.	✓	To provide integrated training between different Secret Service units, the agency conducted 10 live training exercises and six discussion-based tabletop exercises with personnel from different units in fiscal year (FY) 2017. About every two weeks, agents assigned to PPD and VPD each conduct drills and training scenarios, some of which incorporate Uniformed Division officers. In addition, the Secret Service began offering Emergency Action and Building Defense training in October 2014 to Uniformed Division personnel.
3. Train in conditions that replicate the physical environment in which they will operate.	✍️	To train in conditions that replicate the White House, the Secret Service secured approval to build a White House Mockup Training Facility at the James J. Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Maryland. However, the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) FY 2019 budget request to Congress did not include funding for the facility.
4. Increase the Uniformed Division, as quickly as can be appropriately managed, by an initial 200 persons, and the PPD by 85 positions. Perform additional analyses and, likely, further increases as necessary.	✓	The Secret Service increased the number of Uniformed Division officers and the number of agents assigned to PPD by 214 and 151 persons, respectively, from the end of FY 2014 to the end of FY 2018. Further, special agent and Uniformed Division officer external attrition rate declined year-over-year from FY 2016 through FY 2018. The Secret Service also conducted additional analyses to determine optimal staffing levels to be reached by the end of FY 2025. The Secret Service met or exceeded its hiring goals for special agents and Uniformed Division officers in FY 2016 and FY 2018.
5. Reform and professionalize recruiting, hiring, promotion, and rotation process that puts the most talented, capable individuals in place as efficiently as possible.	✓	The Secret Service hired a Chief Human Capital Officer to run the new Office of Human Resources. In addition, the agency implemented several initiatives to strengthen recruiting, expedite hiring, and clarify the promotion process.



Implemented, ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained



Implementation in progress

U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP) Recommendation

Status

Summary of Actions Taken by the U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service)

Technology, perimeter security, and operations

6. Ensure that the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support proactively reviews and refreshes its technological footprint. The Service should receive dedicated funds for technology, both within its own budget and within DHS Science and Technology's budget, to accomplish these tasks.



To address current technical capabilities and future needs, Secret Service officials stated that, as of October 2018, the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support was drafting a strategic investment plan. According to Secret Service officials, the agency is continuing to explore new technology to enhance its technological capabilities to mitigate threats, including threats to airspace.

7. Replace the outer fence that surrounds the 18 acres of the White House complex to give Secret Service personnel more time to react to intrusions.



As of March 2019, the Secret Service was planning to begin construction of the first phase of the new White House fence in May 2019. As a temporary measure, in 2015, the Secret Service and the National Park Service installed bike-rack barricades about 12 feet in front of the permanent fence.

Leadership

8. Clearly communicate agency priorities, give effect to those priorities through its actions, and align its operations with its priorities.



The Secret Service has taken steps to communicate that protection is its priority. The agency reiterated its priorities in its 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and hired a Director of Communications in 2016 to manage the agency's public affairs efforts and to oversee internal agency communication. However, the Secret Service has not fully aligned its operations with its priorities. For example, in response to the PMP's 2014 report identifying that the security incident of September 2014 arose from a "catastrophic failure of training," the Secret Service agreed to having PPD and VPD train 25 percent of their work hours. Implementation of this recommendation is in progress because its operations do not fully align with the stated priorities, as these divisions are not training at agreed-upon levels.

9. Promote specialized expertise in its budget, workforce, and technology functions.



To promote specialized expertise in certain business functions, the Secret Service hired a Chief Operating Officer to run the agency's business functions and elevated senior civilian (non-agent) executives, including the Chief Technology Officer, and the Chief Financial Officer, to lead key staff offices. The agency also hired new professional administrators, instead of promoting special agents, to serve in other senior positions, such as Chief Human Capital Officer and Chief Strategy Officer.



Implemented, ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained



Implementation in progress

U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP) Recommendation	Status	Summary of Actions Taken by the U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service)
10. Present a zero-based or mission-based budget that will provide sufficient resources to accomplish its mission, beginning immediately by working within DHS to adopt a workforce staffing model.		Secret Service has incorporated principles of mission-based budgeting in its budget formulation process. According to Secret Service officials, modeling staffing needs is a key part of mission-based budgeting, and personnel costs accounted for about 71 percent of the Secret Service's FY 2018 budget. The Secret Service developed—and continues to refine—four staffing models that use internal and external data to establish the optimal staffing levels across the agency. Under mission-based budgeting, also known as zero-based budgeting, the agency is to rebuild the budget by clearly defining its mission and desired outcomes and determining what funding level is needed to obtain those outcomes. This process is in contrast to making incremental changes from the prior year's budget.
11. Create more opportunities for officers and agents to provide input on their mission and train its mid- and lower-level managers to encourage, value and respond to such feedback.		To improve communication between the workforce and senior leaders, the Secret Service created a platform on its intranet known as Spark! that encourages employees to submit ideas to senior leaders on how to improve the agency's performance.
12. Lead the federal protective force community.		The Secret Service has engaged with other protective forces, across the federal government, such as the Federal Protective Service, through various mechanisms, including a leadership symposium and technology sharing efforts. According to Secret Service officials, the agency has provided assessments and assistance to other government partners in this area.
13. Receive periodic, outside assessments of the threats to and strategies for protecting the White House compound.		The Secret Service regularly engages with outside partner(s) to have the threats to and strategies for protecting the White House complex assessed.
14. Resume participation in international fora with comparable protective services of friendly nations.		The Secret Service, through the Office of Investigations and the Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information, maintains relationships with international partners to share information. In 2018, the Secret Service, among other things, provided training at International Law Enforcement Academies, which are administered by the Department of State, and provided threat assessments to European partners.
15. Give leadership's priorities and reform the organization's sustained attention and hold the agency accountable through to their completion.		To ensure that the agency implemented the PMP's recommendations, the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy was tasked with overseeing and tracking the PMP's recommendations. This office also coordinated the development of key strategy documents to guide the agency's efforts.
16. Implement a disciplinary system in a consistent manner that demonstrates zero tolerance for failures that are incompatible with its zero-failure mission.		The Secret Service established the Office of Integrity in 2013 to centralize and standardize the disciplinary system across the Secret Service. According to agency officials, for each substantiated incident of employee misconduct, the Chief Integrity Officer and Deputy Chief Integrity Officer determine what formal disciplinary action, if any, is warranted. Further, the Discipline Review Board, composed of senior representatives from each directorate, oversees the discipline system and hears appeals from most personnel. (A separate process is in place for members of the Senior Executive Service.) Disciplinary outcomes are detailed in an annual report so as to increase transparency within the agency.



Implemented, ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained



Implementation in progress

U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP) Recommendation	Status	Summary of Actions Taken by the U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service)
17. Hold forces accountable for performance by using front-line supervisors to constantly test readiness.		The Secret Service introduced new policies and plans to study whether to introduce a “random check” program to test employees’ readiness. In addition, according to Secret Service officials, special agents assigned to PPD and VPD run biweekly drills and training scenarios at the White House complex and at the Vice President’s Residence. In addition, Uniformed Division officers are briefed on emergency actions and responsibilities at shift changes. This recommendation is in progress because it requires additional tests for readiness.
18. The next director of the Secret Service should be a strong leader from outside the agency who has a protective, law enforcement, or military background and who can drive cultural change in the organization and move the Secret Service forward into a new era.		Randolph “Tex” Alles was appointed the Secret Service director in 2017 and was in that position until April 2019. He had not worked at the Secret Service prior to taking on this role, but he served previously as Acting Deputy Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and in the U.S. Marine Corps. This recommendation was implemented through presidential action, as the Secret Service does not select its own director.
19. Establish a leadership development system that identifies and trains the agency’s future managers and leaders.		The Secret Service has taken steps to improve its leadership development system and has provided leadership training at different levels with a focus on first-line supervisors. The agency is also developing the “Framework for Leadership Development,” which is to identify courses and training opportunities to promote leadership skills at all levels.

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service information. | GAO-19-415

Secret Service's Priorities Have Been Communicated, but Recommended Training Targets in Support of Its Priorities Have Not Been Achieved

Secret Service Has Taken Steps to Communicate Agency Priorities and Increased Time Spent on Protection Agencywide

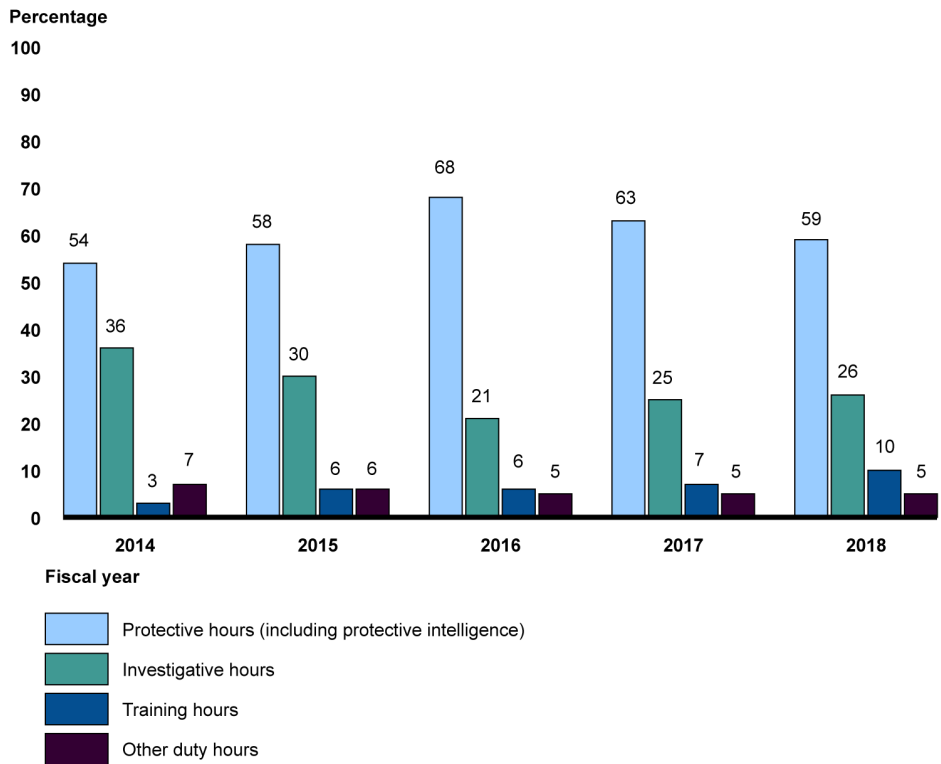
Following the PMP's recommendation that the Secret Service should "clearly communicate agency priorities, give effect to those priorities through its actions, and align its operations with its priorities," the Secret Service took steps toward communicating internally and externally the precedence of protection. For example, the agency hired a Senior Executive Director of Communications in 2016 and formed the Office of Communications and Media Relations in 2018 to manage the agency's public affairs efforts and to oversee internal agency communication. Additionally, each year the Director of the Secret Service issues a strategic priority memorandum that identifies priority areas for the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Further, from fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018, special agents across the entire agency worked more hours on protection assignments and fewer hours on investigations. Specifically, in fiscal year 2014, agents spent 4.3 million hours (54 percent) on protection and 2.8 million hours (36 percent) on investigations, whereas in fiscal year 2018, agents spent 4.9 million hours (59 percent) on protection and 2.2 million hours (26

percent) on investigations.¹⁴ The number and percentage of hours spent on protection peaked in fiscal year 2016, but was higher in fiscal year 2018 than in fiscal year 2014. Figure 2 shows the distribution of agent work hours.

¹⁴In fiscal year 2018, agents worked about 32,000 more protection and investigation hours than they did in fiscal year 2014. In fiscal year 2014, agents spent approximately 4.3 million hours on protection assignments (including protective intelligence), 2.8 million hours on investigations, 260,000 hours in training, and 520,000 hours on other duty assignments. In fiscal year 2015, agents spent approximately 4.6 million hours on protection assignments, 2.3 million hours on investigations, 441,000 hours in training, and 496,000 hours on other duty assignments. In fiscal year 2016, agents spent approximately 5.7 million hours on protection assignments, 1.8 million hours on investigations, 518,000 hours in training, and 404,000 hours on other duty assignments. In fiscal year 2017, agents spent approximately 5.1 million hours on protection assignments, 2.0 million hours on investigations, 606,000 hours in training, and 406,000 hours on other duty assignments. In fiscal year 2018, agents spent approximately 4.9 million hours on protection assignments, 2.2 million hours on investigations, 810,000 hours in training, and 418,000 hours on other duty assignments.

Figure 2: Distribution of Work Hours Reported by All U.S. Secret Service Special Agents, Fiscal Year 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service data. | GAO-19-415

Special Agents Assigned to the Presidential Protective Division and Vice Presidential Protective Division Have Not Met Annual Training Targets

The Secret Service has identified protection as its priority, and the Secret Service has identified training as an essential component of protection. In its December 2014 report, the PMP found that the security incident at the White House on September 19, 2014, arose from a “catastrophic failure of training”. The PMP therefore recommended, and Secret Service agreed at the time, that special agents assigned to PPD and VPD train for

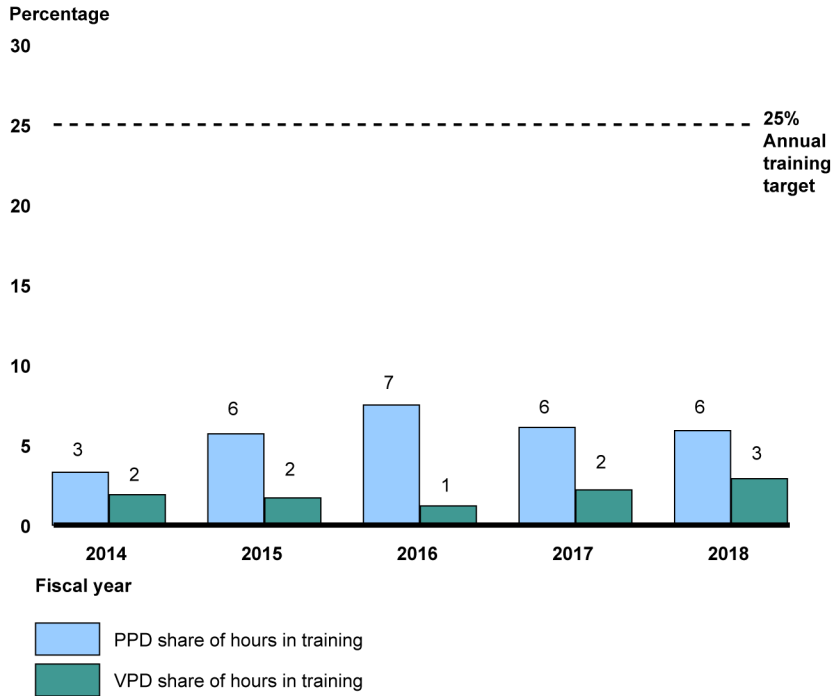
25 percent of their work time.¹⁵ This was to be accomplished by allowing agents time to train during the designated training shift, known as the “fourth shift”.

However, while training for special agents agencywide increased to 10 percent by 2018—more than triple the amount from fiscal year 2014—training for those assigned to PPD and VPD did not increase accordingly.¹⁶ Specifically, special agents assigned to PPD and VPD reported attending training for about 5.9 percent and 2.9 percent of their regular work hours in fiscal year 2018, respectively, compared with 3.3 percent and 1.9 percent in fiscal year 2014. (See figure 3.) According to our analysis of Secret Service self-reported data, in fiscal year 2018, special agents assigned to PPD and VPD missed achieving the 25-percent training target by 76 and 88 percent each. Figure 3 shows the share of regular work hours that agents assigned to PPD and VPD spent in training in fiscal years 2014 through 2018 compared to the annual target.

¹⁵The PMP’s first recommendation was that the Secret Service provide a true “Fourth Shift” for training PPD and VPD, so that they spend two weeks out of every eight in training, and ensure that Uniformed Division officers are in training for no less than 10 percent of their time. For special agents assigned to PPD and VPD, the entirety the “fourth shift” equates to 25 percent of their worktime. The Secret Service adopted the target of 25 percent of agents’ regular work hours. Regular work hours exclude scheduled overtime and Law Enforcement Availability Pay. Secret Service special agents, as federal criminal investigators, are eligible for Law Enforcement Availability Pay, which is intended to compensate criminal investigators who often work excessive and unusual hours and are required to work an annual average of two or more unscheduled duty hours per workday.

¹⁶According to Secret Service officials, special agent training agencywide increased during this time largely due to new-hire training.

Figure 3: Share of Regular Work Hours in Training for Special Agents Assigned to Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and Vice Presidential Protective Division (VPD), Fiscal Years 2014 Through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service data. | GAO-19-415

Note: Regular work-hours include only regular hours and exclude leave, Scheduled Overtime, and Law Enforcement Availability Pay, which all U.S. Secret Service agents work.

The Secret Service established the 25 percent training target for agents assigned to PPD and VPD, and senior officials reaffirmed the target in March 2019.¹⁷ However, according to a senior Office of Protective Operations official, the fast operational tempo (i.e., heavy workload) hampered agents’ ability to participate in training. This official told us that the amount of protection that the Secret Service provides dictates how often agents are assigned protection assignments during the training shift. Senior Secret Service officials further added that the number of protectees and the amount of travel for the current protectees is higher for the current administration than for prior administrations, which reduces the time agents have available for training. According to Secret Service

¹⁷See *Secret Service FY2018-FY2025 Training Strategic Plan* and the *Secret Service FY2018-FY2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*.

officials, the Secret Service's ability to meet the PPD and VPD training targets is dependent on increased staffing levels.

The Secret Service outlined its plans to increase staffing levels in the *Secret Service FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*, which was published in May 2017.¹⁸ The plan describes, among other things, the agency's human capital strategic goals, the process used to determine staffing needs, and annual hiring targets. By the end of fiscal year 2025, the agency plans to employ 9,595 individuals overall, including 4,807 special agents—an increase of 1,193 special agents from the end of fiscal year 2018. To meet the special agent target, the Secret Service assumes an average net growth of about 182 special agents per year between fiscal years 2019 through 2025.¹⁹ However, the Secret Service's human capital strategy does not address the immediate need to help PPD and VPD meet training targets. Even though the special agent staffing level increased from fiscal years 2014 to 2018 by 332 agents, training levels for agents assigned to PPD and VPD remained below the 25-percent target at 6 and 3 percent, respectively, in fiscal year 2018.

Because of the agency's zero-fail responsibility to protect the President and Vice President, the PMP concluded that it is imperative that the Secret Service strive to address training deficits as soon as possible. In addition, according to leading management practices related to training and development efforts, adequate planning allows agencies to establish priorities and determine the best ways to leverage investments to improve performance.²⁰ As part of the planning, agencies may need to compare various training strategies in terms of, among other things, the availability of resources and risk of unfavorable consequences if training investments are not made.

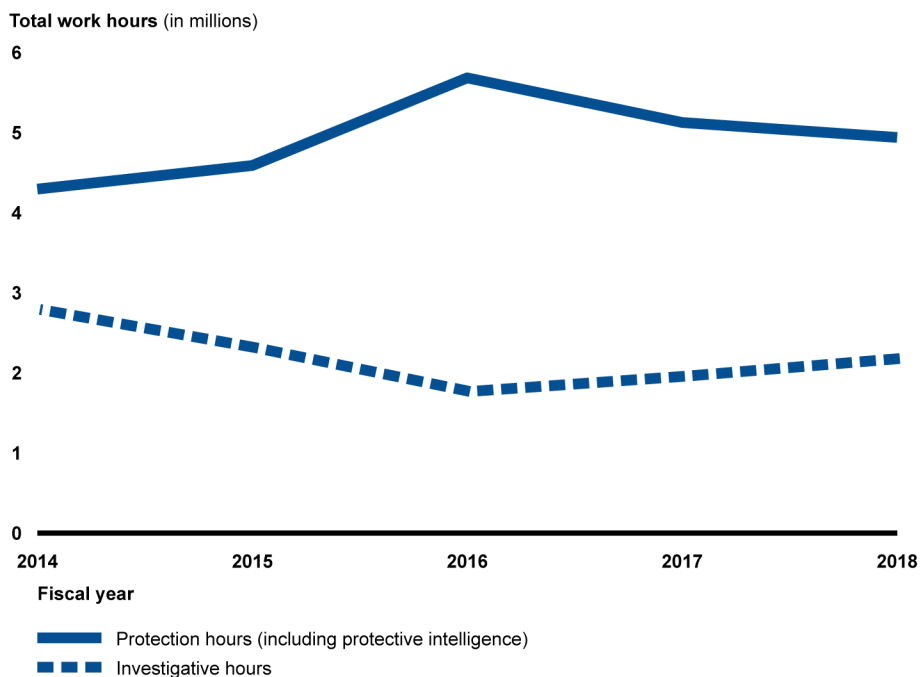
¹⁸According to the Secret Service, the *Human Capital Strategic Plan*, finalized and published in May 2017, has not been approved by the Department of Homeland Security as it includes unfunded out-year requirements.

¹⁹From fiscal years 2015 to 2018, the Secret Service hired a total of 1,315 special agents, including 458 special agents in fiscal year 2018. Because 983 agents left the agency or moved to a non-agent position at the agency during those years, overall staffing levels increased to 3,611 agents at the end of fiscal year 2018. To remain on target to meet the hiring targets established in the *Secret Service FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*, the agency intends to hire between 460 and 547 new agents in each year from fiscal years 2019 through 2025. The agency assumed average net growth of about 182 agents per year during that time.

²⁰[GAO-04-546G](#).

The agency has focused on increasing training as part of its eight-year human capital strategy, but the Secret Service has not developed a plan to ensure that it meets near-term protection-related training targets. One way that the agency could address PPD and VPD training needs in the short term is to shift agents from investigations to protection assignments. Because all agents are trained to provide protection and to conduct investigations, they can be moved between investigations and protection when dictated by operational circumstances. For example, in fiscal year 2016 agents worked about 548,000 fewer investigative hours in order to support protection than they did in fiscal year 2015. This shift was made to accommodate increased protection demand from candidates in the November 2016 presidential election. See figure 5.

Figure 4: Total Protection and Investigation Hours Reported by All U.S. Secret Service Agents, Fiscal Year 2014 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Secret Service data. | GAO-19-415

In fiscal year 2018, agents across the agency spent nearly 2.2 million hours on investigations. By comparison, agents assigned to PPD and VPD would have needed an additional 136,000 hours and 66,000 hours of training, respectively, in fiscal year 2018 to reach the training targets. Shifting agents from investigations to protection would reduce field offices' capacity to complete investigations. However, the agency's stated

priority is protection, and training was identified by the PMP as a key component of protection.

Increasing staffing levels, as planned, over the long term may adequately support the protective and the investigative priorities at the levels defined by the agency. However, the Secret Service is relying on hiring goals alone to achieve its training-related targets, and it may not be able to achieve its hiring goals because of, among other things, uncertainty about whether enough funding will be requested and appropriated to expand the agency at planned levels. For example, an increase of 89 special agents was requested in the fiscal year 2020 budget submitted to Congress, 88 special agents short of the 177 planned for in the *Secret Service FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*. Further, the Secret Service has not developed a plan specifically for meeting training targets for agents assigned to PPD and VPD given current and planned staffing levels.

While reviewing a draft of this report and after further consideration of the resources required to achieve the PMP-recommended training targets, in May 2019 the Secret Service stated that it no longer agrees with the training target recommended by the PMP and plans to reevaluate it. Developing and implementing a plan for meeting established training targets given current and planned staffing levels will help ensure that protection-related training targets are met in the near term and that agents assigned to PPD and VPD are prepared to carry out Secret Service’s priority—protection.

Secret Service Lacks a Policy with a Documented Process for Collecting Complete and Appropriate Training Data for the Uniformed Division

The PMP recommended, and Secret Service agreed, that Uniformed Division officers—who provide protection at the White House—train for 10 percent of their work time. However, the Secret Service cannot fully assess progress towards achieving the 10-percent training target because it lacks complete and appropriate protection-related training data for Uniformed Division officers. *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state that management should design control activities to achieve objectives and respond to risks, and that management should implement control activities through policies.²¹

²¹Control activities are the policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms that enforce management’s directives to achieve the entity’s objectives and address related risks.

Appropriate types of control activities include, for example, the accurate and timely recording of transactions. Internal control standards also state that management should use quality information to achieve the entity's objective. Quality information is appropriate, current, complete, accurate, accessible, and provided on a timely basis.

According to Secret Service officials, training data for Uniformed Division officers are collected through various means and systems. For example, officials stated that they use a database called ePerson to capture certain types of training, such as firearms and physical training requalification sessions. In addition, officials report that Secret Service separately uses DHS's Performance and Learning Management System (PALMS), which DHS designed to consolidate existing learning management systems for each of DHS's agencies. PALMS collects data on computer-based training and training provided at the James J. Rowley Training Center automatically, but requires manual entry for training provided at offsite locations. According to Secret Service officials, there are a significant amount of internal on-the-job training instances that do not get recorded. As a result, training data collected on Uniformed Division training hours are incomplete.

Further, we reviewed the training data that the Uniformed Division provided to us and identified a number of data quality issues affecting the data's completeness and appropriateness. For example, certain training was identified by location only or lacked descriptions to clearly link the training to the skills Uniformed Division officers require while working at the White House. Additionally, Secret Service counted training unrelated to protection, such as training on electronic travel vouchers and retirement planning, towards achievement of the 10-percent protection-training target. This occurred because the Secret Service lacks a policy with a documented process identifying how to capture Uniformed Division training information and the type of training to be captured.

According to Uniformed Division management, the Secret Service initiated a process in 2017 to enhance the collection and compilation of Uniformed Division training information. Specifically, each Uniformed Division branch training coordinator is to send a list of completed training to Uniformed Division management every 2 weeks. That training information, along with information captured in other systems such as PALMS, is then to be manually compiled by a Uniformed Division staff person at Secret Service's headquarters. However, the Secret Service has not consistently employed the new process since initiating it in 2017. For example, according to Secret Service officials, the individual

responsible for compiling the data was absent from the position for 3 months, and they did not know whether the data for that period were compiled at that time. As personnel—such as the branch training coordinators or the individual responsible for compiling the data—change positions, it is important that the Secret Service have a policy with a documented process to ensure that data collection continues over time and given staff changes. Further, the process does not include information on how or whether to capture internal on-the-job training instances, or instruction on the type of training to be captured to demonstrate that the training is protection-related training. Developing and implementing a policy with a documented process to collect complete and appropriate Uniformed Division officer training data would better position Secret Service to assess Uniform Division officer training data and make informed decisions about whether and how training needs and the 10-percent training are being met.

Conclusions

Protecting the White House, the President, and the Vice President, among others, is a zero-fail responsibility. As such, the Secret Service must be prepared to face every evolving threat in a rapidly changing environment. This involves having certain specific security skills and routine training on an ongoing basis. In December 2014, the PMP recommended that the Secret Service align its operations with its priorities, and chief among these is protection. It further recommended, and the Secret Service agreed to, achieving specified training targets. While training alone will not guarantee the safety of the Secret Service's protectees, developing and implementing a plan for meeting protection-related training targets would better prepare special agents to effectively respond to the security threats faced by the President and other protectees. Further, the Secret Service lacks a documented process for collecting Uniformed Division training data that the agency can use to determine whether officers trained for 10 percent of their work hours, as recommended by the PMP. Implementing such a policy could help the Secret Service make informed decisions about Uniformed Division training.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following two recommendations to the Secret Service:

The Director of the Secret Service should develop and implement a plan to ensure that special agents assigned to PPD and VPD reach annual training targets given current and planned staffing levels.
(Recommendation 1)

The Director of the Secret Service should develop and implement a policy that documents the process for collecting complete Uniformed Division officer training data and establishes the types of information that should be collected. (Recommendation 2)

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a copy of this report to DHS for review and comment. DHS provided written comments, which are reproduced in appendix II. DHS also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

In its comments, Secret Service, through DHS concurred with the two recommendations. However, related to the first recommendation—develop and implement a plan to ensure that special agents assigned to PPD and VPD reach annual training targets given current and planned staffing levels—Secret Service also stated that after further consideration, the agency no longer believes that the annual training target for Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions should be set at 25 percent of their work time. We incorporated this change in our report. In its comments, the agency stated that the Secret Service Office of Training will work with the Office of Protective Operations to evaluate the training metric for PPD and VPD and develop a plan focusing on increasing capacity at training facilities, achieving staffing growth, and creating efficiencies in protective division scheduling.

With respect to the second recommendation—to develop and implement a policy that documents the process for collecting complete Uniformed Division officer training data and establish the types of information that should be collected—Secret Service, through DHS stated that it will develop rigorous and uniform standards for collecting and reporting training data related to the Uniformed Division branch. The agency also stated that it will continue to add training programs to the Performance and Learning Management System and capture informal and on-the-job training hours for the Uniformed Division. DHS stated that the Secret Service expects to review the Enterprise Personnel Schedule System within the next 2 months and anticipates these efforts will result in a more accurate and expansive method for reporting Uniformed Division training.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3841 or AndersonN@gao.gov. Contact points for our Office of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.



Nathan J. Anderson
Acting Director,
Homeland Security and Justice Issues

List of Committees

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Lindsay Graham
Chairman
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
The Honorable Doug Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Chairman
The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Implementation of U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel Recommendations

In October 2014, the then-Secretary of Homeland Security established the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP) and tasked the independent panel to review the security incident that occurred at the White House on September 19, 2014 as well as related security issues. The PMP made 19 public recommendations—as well as additional classified recommendations—to the U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service) in three areas: (1) training and personnel; (2) technology, perimeter security, and operations; and (3) leadership. In this appendix, we list the 19 recommendations and accompanying text as published in the *Executive Summary to Report from the United States Secret Service Protective Mission Panel to the Secretary of Homeland Security*, dated December 15, 2014.

The Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018 includes a provision that we report on a detailed summary of the Secret Service’s progress implementing the PMP’s recommendations.¹ Specifically, for each recommendation, we provide our assessment of the Secret Service’s progress, describe some of the actions the Secret Service has taken to implement the recommendations, and identify the actions the agency said it plans to complete.

PMP Recommendation 1

Provide a true “Fourth Shift” for training the Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions, so that they spend two weeks out of every eight in training, and ensure that Uniformed Division officers are in training for no less than 10 percent of their time.

According to the PMP, “Only with constant training can all of the teams at the White House perform the coordinated actions needed to effectively respond.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service instituted a fourth and fifth shift for its Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and a fourth shift Vice Presidential Protective Division (VPD). The fourth shift was created to provide agents

¹Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-160, § 3, 132 Stat. 1246, 1247-48.

with time to participate in training educational opportunities, conduct advances, and take leave. Implementation is still in progress because neither PPD nor VPD special agents consistently used this time to train and are missed the training targets established by this recommendation. In commenting on a draft of this report in May 2019, the Secret Service stated that it no longer agrees with the training target and plans to reevaluate it. The Secret Service does not have a documented process for collecting complete and appropriate Uniformed Division training data that the agency can use to determine whether officers trained for 10 percent of their work hours.

Details:

- The Secret Service adopted the PMP goal for agents assigned to PPD and VPD to train for 25 percent of their regular work hours. However, in fiscal year 2018, according to self-reported data, these agents attended training for about 5.9 percent and 2.9 percent of their regular work hours, respectively.
- Although the fourth shift was developed to provide special agents assigned to PPD and VPD time away from shift work during which they could attend training, agents have largely not attended training during the fourth shift, according to agency officials. Agents are instead assigned to additional advance assignments or use leave, as agents are not allowed to take leave during the three regular shifts except in an emergency.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: In its *FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan and FY 2018 – FY 2025 Training Strategic Plan*, the Secret Service stated that increasing staffing levels would allow the agency more flexibility with how it schedules shifts and advance assignments, thereby freeing up special agents’ and Uniformed Division officers’ time for training. The agency plans to have 4,807 agents and 1,797 Uniformed Division officers by the end of fiscal year 2025, up from 3,614 agents and 1,559 officers at the end of fiscal year 2018. The Secret Service also plans to reevaluate the training target for special agents assigned to PPD and VPD.

**PMP
Recommendation 2**

Implement integrated training focused on ensuring that all teams at the White House know their roles in responding to specific threats.

According to the PMP, “Teams need to train with the full complement of forces with which they will operate in real life, and the training needs to be

provided force-wide, not just to those on duty on the day that training is scheduled.”

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To provide integrated training between different Secret Service units, the agency conducted 10 live training exercises and six discussion-based tabletop exercises with personnel from different units in fiscal year 2017. About every two weeks, agents assigned to PPD and VPD each conduct drills and training scenarios, some of which incorporate Uniformed Division officers. In addition, the Secret Service began offering Emergency Action and Building Defense training in October 2014 to Uniformed Division personnel.

Details:

- In fiscal year 2017, the Secret Service conducted 10 live training exercises and 6 discussion-based tabletop exercises with personnel from different units. Among the live exercises, the Secret Service conducted a readiness exercise at the White House in December 2017.
- About every two weeks, agents assigned to the PPD and VPD conduct drills and training scenarios, some of which incorporate Uniformed Division officers, according to a Secret Service official. These drills take place at the White House, the Naval Observatory, the Department of Treasury building, and the Rowley Training Center.
- Secret Service began offering Emergency Action and Building Defense training in October 2014 to Uniformed Division personnel. Topics addressed in the course include judgment, firearm control, constitutional law, and emergency medicine. The Emergency Action and Building Defense course is part of the training that new Uniformed Division recruits take.
- In recent years, the Secret Service conducted joint training exercises with local, state, federal, and foreign tactical units. According to Secret Service officials, the agency conducted 53 of these joint training exercises in fiscal year 2015 through 2018.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

PMP Recommendation 3

Train in conditions that replicate the physical environment in which they will operate.

According to the PMP, “A security team should also be trained so that it is intimately familiar with the space in which it is operating.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To train in conditions that replicate the White House, the Secret Service secured approval to build a White House Mockup Training Facility at the James J. Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Maryland. However, the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) fiscal year 2019 budget request to Congress did not include funding for the facility.

Details:

- In 2017, the National Capital Planning Commission approved the Secret Service’s revised master plan for the Rowley Training Center, which includes the White House Mockup Training Facility.
- The fiscal year 2019 Resource Allocation Plan request submitted by the Secret Service to DHS included \$77.4 million for the construction project over 5 years. However, the fiscal year 2019 DHS budget request did not include funding for the facility.²
- Some agent and officer training takes place in the operating environment. According to a Secret Service official, agents assigned to the PPD and VPD run drills and training scenarios about every two weeks. Some of the training takes place at the White House, the Naval Observatory, and the Department of the Treasury building, although most training takes place at the Rowley Training Center. These drills and scenarios sometimes also include Uniformed Division officers. In December 2017, the Secret Service conducted a readiness exercise involving multiple units at the White House.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service will proceed with construction of the White House Mockup Training

²The federal budget process provides the means for the President and Congress to make informed decisions between competing national needs and policies, allocate resources among federal agencies, and ensure laws are executed according to established priorities.

Facility when funding is available. It was not included in DHS's fiscal year 2019 budget request.

PMP Recommendation 4

Increase the Uniformed Division, as quickly as can be appropriately managed, by an initial 200 positions, and the Presidential Protective Division by 85 positions. Perform additional analyses and, likely, further increases as necessary.

According to the PMP, "Both the Uniformed Division and the Presidential Protective Division are currently stretched beyond their limits."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service increased the number of Uniformed Division officers and the number of agents assigned to PPD by 214 and 151 persons, respectively, from the end of fiscal year 2014 to the end of fiscal year 2018. Further, special agent and Uniformed Division officer external attrition rate declined year-over-year from fiscal year 2016 to fiscal year 2018. The Secret Service also conducted additional analyses to determine optimal staffing levels to be reached by the end of fiscal year 2025. The Secret Service met or exceeded its hiring goals for special agents and Uniformed Division officers in fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2018.

Details:

- From the end of fiscal year 2014 to the end of fiscal year 2018, the Secret Service increased the number of agents assigned to PPD from 248 to 399—a net increase of 151 agents—and the number of Uniformed Division officers from 1,345 to 1,559—a net increase of 214 officers.
- The Secret Service conducted additional analyses and set hiring goals in the *FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*. Specifically, by the end of fiscal year 2020, the Secret Service aims to have 3,927 special agents, 1,657 Uniformed Division officers, and 2,366 Administrative, Professional, and Technical staff. By the end of fiscal year 2025, the Secret Service aims to have 4,807 special agents, 1,797 Uniformed Division officers, and 2,991 Administrative, Professional, and Technical staff.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service is planning to continually validate the human capital strategic plan to ensure that staffing levels are responsive to changes in the agency's operational tempo. The Secret Service also plans to fill administrative jobs that are currently filled by Uniformed Division officers with Administrative, Professional, and Technical employees, so that the Uniformed Division personnel are more focused on protection.

PMP Recommendation 5

Reform and professionalize recruiting, hiring, promotion, and rotation process that puts the most talented, capable individuals in place as efficiently as possible.

According to the PMP, "The Secret Service must continue efforts to develop a professionalized recruiting and hiring process that finds talented individuals, evaluates candidates rigorously for the Presidential Protective Division, and hires them quickly."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service hired a Chief Human Capital Officer to run the new Office of Human Resources. In addition, the agency implemented several initiatives to strengthen recruiting, expedite hiring, and clarify the promotion process.

Details:

- The Secret Service reorganized the Office of Human Resources as a stand-alone directorate and hired a Chief Human Capital Officer, who is a professional administrator.
- The Secret Service developed a *National Recruitment Strategy for FY 2016–FY 2020* and the *Recruitment and Outreach Plan for FY 2018* to help ensure that the agency is able to meet its staffing requirements through effective and targeted recruitment strategies. Recruitment strategies include increasing the agency's social media presence, improving the training of its recruiters, and expanding cooperation with the Department of Defense to recruit service members departing the military.

- The Secret Service developed a number of hiring initiatives, which according to agency officials, reduced time-to-hire for special agents and Uniformed Division officers from an average of 395 days in fiscal year 2016 to 285 days in fiscal year 2018. For example, the agency created Entry Level Assessment Centers that allow applicants to complete several application steps in one week, including the entrance examination, the Special Agent and Uniformed Division Pre-employment Review, and the security interview. The agency also established the Applicant Coordination Center to track applicant processing. In particular, the Applicant Coordination Center brings together a polygraph examiner, a nurse, a security clearance adjudicator, and a human resources specialist to usher candidates through the hiring steps. The agency also began using the web-based Applicant Lifecycle Information System to view applicant materials, process security investigations, send conditional job offers, and track candidates' progress in one place.
- The Secret Service published special agent Career Progression guidelines in September 2015 and published a revision to the special agent Merit Promotion Process for agents in May 2017.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: According to agency officials, the Secret Service is currently revising the Uniformed Division Merit Promotion Process and is implementing the Administrative, Professional, and Technical Career Progression Plan. The agency also plans to update and consolidate internal policies for agent and Uniformed Division officer recruitment and hiring.

PMP Recommendation 6

Ensure that the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support proactively reviews and refreshes the Service's technological footprint. The Service should receive dedicated funds for technology, both within its own budget and within DHS Science and Technology's budget, to accomplish these tasks.

According to the PMP, "Technology systems used on the complex must always remain on the cutting edge, and the Secret Service must invest in technology, including becoming a driver of research and development that may assist in its mission."

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To address current technical capabilities and future needs, Secret Service officials stated that, as of October 2018, the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support was drafting a strategic investment plan. According to Secret Service officials, the agency is continuing to explore new technology to enhance its technological capabilities to mitigate threats, including threats to airspace.

Details:

- According to an agency official, as of October 2018, the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support is drafting a five-year strategic investment plan. The plan is to address current technical capabilities as well as needs into the future.
- According to Secret Service officials, for more than 10 years, the Secret Service's Science and Technology Review Committee has met quarterly to discuss protection-related technology requirements. The committee is chaired by the Chief Technology Officer, overseen by the Enterprise Governance Council, and open to representatives from all Secret Service directorates. The Enterprise Governance Council is composed of Deputy Assistant Directors from several Secret Service offices and is responsible for overseeing the agency's investments in science and technology, information technology, and other capital assets.
- Also according to agency officials, the Secret Service works with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate, partner agencies, and external stakeholders on technological issues. In particular, the Science and Technology Directorate develops pilot programs based on the Secret Service's technical requirements.
- According to an agency official, the Secret Service conducts performance reviews of different technology systems each month with the aim of evaluating the performance of every deployed system at least once per year.
- In fiscal year 2017, Congress appropriated \$2.5 million to the Secret Service for research and development.³ In addition, the Act appropriated \$1.8 billion to the Secret Service for Operations and Support, and the Secret Service allocated \$98.2 million to the Secret

³Pub. L. No. 115-31, 131 Stat. 135, 410.

Service for the Operational Mission Support, which helps to protect the President, Vice President, and others from emerging explosive, chemical, biological, radiological, and cyber threats. The funding for the Operational Mission Support program is divided between technology operations and support; procurement, construction, and improvements; and research and development. According to agency officials, the Secret Service does not receive dedicated technology funds through the DHS Science and Technology Directorate.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: Complete and execute the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support's 5-year strategic investment plan. The plan is intended to address research and development regarding, among other things, ways to mitigate emerging physical and technical threats and identify additional threats.

PMP Recommendation 7:

Replace the outer fence that surrounds the 18 acres of the White House complex to give Secret Service personnel more time to react to intrusions.

According to the PMP, "The current seven-and-a-half-foot fence, not just along Pennsylvania Avenue but around the compound's entire perimeter, must be replaced as quickly as possible."

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: As of March 2019, the Secret Service was planning to begin construction of the first phase of the new White House fence in May 2019. As a temporary measure, in 2015, the Secret Service and the National Park Service installed bike-rack barricades about 12 feet in front of the permanent fence.

Details:

- As a temporary measure, in 2015 the Secret Service and the National Park Service installed bike rack barricades about 12 feet in front of the permanent White House fence. According to Secret Service officials, the bike-rack barricades give Secret Service personnel more time to respond to fence-jumpers. The Secret Service additionally installed several interim countermeasures to the existing fences, including additional spikes.

- The Secret Service is preparing to break ground and begin construction on the Phase I sections of the White House fence in May or June 2019, according to an agency official in December 2018. Phase I includes a fence surrounding the White House and its immediate grounds. The Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capitol Planning Commission approved the Phase I project in January and February 2017, respectively.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take:

- Phase I fence construction is scheduled to begin in May or June 2019.
- Phase II planning and construction. In its fiscal year 2019 budget request, the Secret Service requested \$3 million for preliminary design development of Phase II of the White House fence project. Phase II is to expand the new fence to the Treasury Building and the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

PMP
Recommendation 8

Clearly communicate agency priorities, give effect to those priorities through its actions, and align its operations with its priorities.

According to the PMP, “Secret Service’s leadership must make those choices in a manner to ensure that its core protective mission remains first priority.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service has taken steps to communicate that protection is its priority. The agency reiterated its priorities in its 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and hired a Director of Communications in 2016 to manage the agency’s public affairs efforts and to oversee internal agency communication. However, the Secret Service has not fully aligned its operations with its priorities. For example, in response to the PMP’s 2014 report identifying that the security incident of September 2014 arose from a “catastrophic failure of training,” the Secret Service agreed to having its Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions train 25 percent of their work hours. Implementation of this recommendation is in progress because its operations do not fully align with the stated priorities, as these divisions are not training at agreed-upon levels.

Details:

- To implement this recommendation, the Secret Service sought to improve internal and external communication efforts. The agency did so by hiring a senior executive Director of Communications in 2016 and forming the Office of Communications and Media Relations in 2017 to manage the agency's public affairs efforts and to oversee internal agency communication. In addition, in October 2015, the Secret Service developed an internal agency communication platform known as Spark!. The Spark! platform allows all employees to share ideas and submit suggestions on how to improve the agency's performance and efficiency, thereby improving communication within the agency.
- The DHS Office of Policy reviewed the dual missions of the Secret Service and issued a report that emphasized the importance of the protective and investigative missions (January 2017). Secret Service officials cited this report as evidence that the agency evaluated its priorities and resource allocation decisions.
- Secret Service data show that agents increased the share of work hours spent on protection compared with investigation from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2018. Overall, based on our analysis of Secret Service data, 59 percent of special agent hours in fiscal year 2018 were spent on protection and 26 percent on investigations. This is in contrast to 54 percent protection and 36 percent investigations in fiscal year 2014. However, agents worked an average of 2.2 million hours annually on investigations over that period, even though agents assigned to the PPD and VPD did not meet training targets during that time. Despite shifting resources toward protection, the Secret Service's operations and associated resource allocation do not fully align with its stated priority, protection, because training is an essential component of agents' protection assignments.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

**PMP
Recommendation 9**

Promote specialized expertise in its budget, workforce, and technology functions.

According to the PMP, "Filling important administrative functions with agents rather than professional administrators may not be optimal."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To promote specialized expertise in certain business functions, the Secret Service hired a Chief Operating Officer to run the agency's business functions and elevated senior civilian (non-agent) executives, including the Chief Technology Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, to lead key staff offices. The agency also hired new professional administrators, instead of promoting special agents, to serve in other senior positions, such as Chief Human Capital Officer and Chief Strategy Officer.

Details:

- The Secret Service reorganized the agency to promote specialized expertise in certain functions. In 2015, the Secret Service established the position of Chief Operating Officer. This principal administrator, who is equivalent in rank to the Deputy Director, directs the agency's business and programmatic activities, with a focus on improving performance, hiring and retaining personnel, and aligning budgetary and strategic planning efforts.
- The Secret Service professionalized the leadership of several directorates by elevating or hiring civilian senior executives, instead of placing special agents in these specialized positions. For example, in 2015, the civilian who was serving as Chief Financial Officer was placed in charge of the newly created Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Similarly, the Chief Information Officer was placed in charge of the newly created Office of the Chief Information Officer. Also, in 2015, the civilian Chief Technology Officer was placed in charge of the Office of Technical Development and Mission Support, and the Secret Service hired a civilian from outside of the agency to become Chief Human Capital Officer—a position that was formerly held by a special agent. In 2016, the agency created two additional senior, civilian positions: Chief Strategy Officer and Director of Communications.
- Secret Service officials stated that the agency is currently developing a training course to instruct senior special agents in the agency budget process.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

PMP Recommendation 10

Present a zero-based or mission-based budget that will provide sufficient resources to accomplish its mission, beginning immediately by working within DHS to adopt a workforce staffing model.

According to the PMP, “The Service must build a new budget from the ground up by defining its mission, determining what it will take to achieve it, and asking for that. The mission is important enough to justify that approach.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service has incorporated principles of mission-based budgeting in its budget formulation process. According to Secret Service officials, modeling staffing needs is a key part of mission-based budgeting, and personnel costs accounted for about 71 percent of the Secret Service’s fiscal year 2018 budget. The Secret Service developed—and continues to refine—four staffing models that use internal and external data to establish the optimal staffing levels across the agency. Under mission-based budgeting, also known as zero-base budgeting, the agency is to rebuild the budget by clearly defining its mission and desired outcomes and determining what funding level is needed to obtain those outcomes. This process is in contrast to making incremental changes from the prior year’s budget.

Details:

- The Secret Service has worked to incorporate a mission-based budgeting process into its overall budget formulation. The Director annually issues priority memos to guide the development of the Secret Service Resource Allocation Plan submissions to DHS. In 2016, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer introduced a mission-based budgeting approach for developing the FY 2018 – FY 2022 Resource Allocation Plan submission. Further, the Secret Service’s Resource Allocation Plan prioritizes the agency’s needs for inclusion in DHS’s annual budget request to Congress.
- Part of the Secret Service’s mission-based budgeting approach involved assessing human capital needs. The Secret Service developed four workforce staffing models that provided a basis to identify valid baseline staffing levels for the agency, a key component to the mission-based budgeting process. According to Secret Service

officials, these staffing models are designed to ensure that the agency is staffed in such a way that its personnel are properly trained, overtime is minimized, and proper support personnel are in place so that it is fully prepared to meet mission demands. The Secret Service used the results of the staffing models to develop the *Secret Service FY 2018–FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*, published in May 2017, which detailed the agency’s plan to increase the workforce to 9,595 total employees by the end of fiscal year 2025.

- Secret Service officials acknowledge that they still have to strengthen their budget processes. Specifically, they would like to make the budget process more analytical and data-driven. For example, agency officials want to make better use of budget data to support planning and budget requests, such as by combining financial data with programmatic information to better inform budget decisions. Agency officials want to hire one or more individuals who can better interpret and use those data.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: Secret Service officials said they plan to continue to hone the staffing models. For example, the agency plans to include annual leave and increased training levels in the next iterations of the models.

PMP Recommendation 11

Create more opportunities for officers and agents to provide input on their mission and train its mid- and lower-level managers to encourage, value and respond to such feedback.

According to the PMP, “Leadership and, even more critically, mid- and lower-level managers, need to make clear that their mission requires that they get things right—and thus that the agency values information out of sync with the status quo or the leadership’s views.”

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To improve communication between the workforce and senior leaders, the Secret Service created a platform on its intranet known as Spark! that encourages employees to submit ideas to senior leaders on how to improve the agency’s performance.

Details:

- In October 2015, the Secret Service deployed the Spark! platform, which allows all employees to share ideas and submit suggestions on how to improve the agency's performance and efficiency. The platform allows two-way communication between leadership and the workforce. The Secret Service reported that in 2017, 96 percent of employees have contributed to a discussion on the site. The agency also reported that, as of June 2018, 51 workforce-generated ideas had been implemented or were being implemented.
- According to Secret Service officials, several ideas that originated from employees have prompted changes at the agency. These developments include the formation of a new category of employees, known as Technical Law Enforcement in 2018; the introduction of a chaplaincy program in 2017; and the development of the Administrative, Technical, and Professional Career Track.
- Since 2015, the Secret Service offered a training course on workplace communication called "Enhancing Workplace Communication". According to agency data, 72 employees took the course in fiscal year 2017 and 2018.
- From November 2014 to December 2015, the Secret Service contracted with Eagle Hill Consulting to conduct an independent assessment of quality-of-life issues at the Secret Service. The agency workforce was able to provide input through 47 focus groups and an agency-wide anonymous survey. In its final report dated August 22, 2016, Eagle Hill Consulting provided Secret Service management with 22 recommendations to improve quality of life for agency employees.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service plans to introduce additional leadership courses for personnel at all levels. It also plans to remove potential barriers to communication between employees and supervisors by revising merit promotion processes for Uniformed Division officers and for special agents.

**PMP
Recommendation 12**

Lead the federal protective force community.

According to the PMP, "Collaboration with protective forces like the Federal Protective Service, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, the FBI Police, and the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and other agencies, especially on technology, could significantly increase opportunities for innovation."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service has engaged with other protective forces, across the federal government, such as the Federal Protective Service, through various mechanisms, including a leadership symposium and technology sharing efforts. According to Secret Service officials, the agency has provided assessments and assistance to other government partners in this area.

Details:

- In 2015, the Secret Service chaired a leadership symposium with other federal agencies to discuss roles, responsibilities, and procedures in the event of a critical incident in the National Capital Region and specifically at the White House.
- Secret Service officials stated that the agency often consults with federal peers to benchmark capabilities and organizational structures to identify possibilities for improvement. In addition, officials stated that the Secret Service partners with other agencies, leading to technological developments. Developments to date include deployment of a fixed-site sub-sonic detection capability with the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia; a fixed-site super-sonic detection capability with the U.S. Army; and a vehicle motorcade detection capability with the Department of Defense.
- The Secret Service's Protective Intelligence and Assessment Division participates in the International Security Events Group when a Secret Service protectee will be traveling to a high-profile international event, such as the Olympics Games. The International Security Events Group is a working group for over 20 federal security and law enforcement agencies and is managed by the Department of State.
- According to Secret Service officials, at the request of the Office of Management and Budget, the Secret Service has shared expertise with other agencies, including the U.S. Marshals Service, to help to standardize the protection of cabinet-level government officials.
- Also according to agency officials, the Secret Service leads the federal force protective community in many areas. For example, the agency's Hazardous Agent Mitigation Medical Emergency Response team has the capability to detect, mitigate, and response to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks on protectees, and the

team consults with other agencies on these issues, according to agency officials.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None.

PMP Recommendation 13

Receive periodic, outside assessments of the threats to and strategies for protecting the White House compound.

According to the PMP, “The Secret Service should engage other federal agencies to evaluate the threats that the agency faces and its ways of doing business.”

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service regularly engages with outside partner(s) to have the threats to and strategies for protecting the White House complex assessed.

Details:

- The Secret Service has a memorandum of agreement in place with partner agencies to ensure that the outside assessments continue.
- Between 2015 and 2018, non-Secret Service partner(s) assessed the threats to and strategies for protecting the White house compound between two and four times per year.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

PMP Recommendation 14

Resume participation in international fora with comparable protective services of friendly nations.

According to the PMP, “While most national protective forces do not compare to the Secret Service, those of certain nations are much more similar than they are different.”

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service, through the Office of Investigations and the Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information, maintains relationships with international partners to share information. In 2018, the Secret Service, among other things, provided training at International Law Enforcement Academies, which are administered by the Department of State, and provided threat assessments to European partners.

Details:

- The Office of Investigations' International Programs Division provides training to foreign law enforcement organizations through the Department of State's International Law Enforcement Academies. The Secret Service provides training at all five of the academy's locations: Bangkok, Thailand; Budapest, Hungary; Gaborone, Botswana; San Salvador, El Salvador; and Roswell, New Mexico. According to agency officials, the Secret Service provided instruction on the agency's protection methods to over 900 personnel in 2018.
- The Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information maintains international partnerships to enable the sharing of information and best practices. For example, in 2018, agency officials presented threat assessments to European partners on at least two occasions.
- Secret Service officials noted that the agency hosts groups of foreign law enforcement personnel for dignitary protection seminars. The seminars are intended to, among other things, encourage future cooperation.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service plans to establish a process for developing proposals to enhance intelligence and operational activities with foreign partners. The agency also plans to formalize a process for senior executive approval of these proposals.

PMP Recommendation 15

Give leadership's priorities and reform the organization's sustained attention and hold the agency accountable through to their completion.

According to the PMP, "Following through on reforms and recommendations has been an issue for the Secret Service in the past."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: To ensure that the agency implemented the PMP's recommendations, the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy (OSP) was tasked with overseeing and tracking the PMP's recommendations. This office also coordinated the development of key strategy documents to guide the agency's efforts.

Details:

- Secret Service executive leaders tasked OSP to oversee and track the implementation of the PMP's recommendations. The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy coordinated the development of three key strategy documents: the *FY 2018 – FY 2022 Strategic Plan*, the *FY 2018 – FY 2025 Training Strategic Plan*, and the *FY 2018 – FY 2025 Human Capital Strategic Plan*.
- Additionally, the OSP refined existing performance measures and is developing additional mechanisms to enhance reporting on performance goals to senior leadership. This includes monthly and quarterly reports on key performance metrics and indicators.
- In January 2017, the agency revived its Enterprise Governance Council, a deliberative body made up of the deputies from each Secret Service directorate. The Enterprise Governance Council oversees agency-wide priorities, including managing the Resource Allocation Plan process, which prioritizes the Secret Service's needs for inclusion in the annual budget request.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

PMP Recommendation 16

Implement a disciplinary system in a consistent manner that demonstrates zero tolerance for failures that are incompatible with its zero-failure mission.

According to the PMP, "It is clear that the rank-and-file—and even very senior current and former members of the Secret Service—do not have confidence that discipline is imposed in a fair and consistent manner."

Status: Implemented; ongoing work may be required to ensure recommendation is sustained.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service established the Office of Integrity in 2013 to centralize and standardize the disciplinary system across the Secret Service. According to agency officials, for each substantiated incident of employee misconduct, the Chief Integrity Officer and Deputy Chief Integrity Officer determine what formal disciplinary action, if any, is warranted. Further, the Discipline Review Board, composed of senior representatives from each directorate, oversees the discipline system and hears appeals from most personnel. (A separate process is in place for members of the Senior Executive Service.) Disciplinary outcomes are detailed in an annual report so as to increase transparency within the agency.

Details:

- The Office of Integrity was established in 2013 to centralize the disciplinary system across the agency. Previously, Special Agents in Charge of field offices had the responsibility of addressing employee misconduct and determining the penalty, according to an agency official.
- In 2015, the Office of Integrity began publishing an annual discipline report which provides an overview of disciplinary actions taken by deciding officials and analyzes misconduct trends.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service plans to conduct a formal review and periodic analysis of the Office of Integrity to ensure that it is fulfilling its intended purpose.

PMP Recommendation 17

Hold forces accountable for performance by using front-line supervisors to constantly test readiness.

According to the PMP, “To be ready for a job where quick reactions and reflexes are critical, supervisors need to drive home to their officers and agents that the front line is constantly being tested.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service introduced new policies and plans to study whether to introduce a “random check” program to test employees’

readiness. In addition, according to Secret Service officials, special agents assigned to PPD and VPD run biweekly drills and training scenarios at the White House complex and at the Vice President's Residence, while Uniformed Division officers are briefed on emergency actions and responsibilities at shift changes. This recommendation is in progress because it requires additional tests for readiness.

Details:

- In December 2017, the Secret Service conducted scenario readiness exercise involving multiple units at the White House.
- According to Secret Service officials, the agency runs drills and training scenarios about every 2 weeks. These drills have taken place at the White House, the Naval Observatory (the Vice President's Residence), and at the Department of the Treasury building. Agents assigned to PPD and VPD are the primary training participants, but Uniformed Division officers are often involved as well. More recently, the training scenarios have included other groups if the practice incident is off, or near the edge, of the White House complex. For example, training scenarios may include U.S. Park Police or Secret Service personnel assigned to the Washington Field Office.
- The Uniformed Division conducts daily personnel shift briefs, which cover emergency actions and responsibilities.
- The Office of Protective Operations instituted training classes for personnel assigned to the Joint Operations Center. The Joint Operations Center is located away from the White House and is responsible for managing day-to-day Secret Service operations and coordinating emergency response.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: The Secret Service plans to study whether to introduce a "random check" program to test employees on their responsibilities at operational posts.

**PMP
Recommendation 18**

The next director of the Secret Service should be a strong leader from outside the agency who has a protective, law enforcement, or military background and who can drive cultural change in the organization and move the Secret Service forward into a new era.

According to the PMP, "The need to change, reinvigorate, and question long-held assumptions—from within the agency itself—is too critical right now for the next director to be an insider."

Status: Implemented.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: Randolph “Tex” Alles was appointed the Secret Service director in 2017 and was in that position until 2019. He had not worked at the Secret Service prior to taking on this role, but he served previously as Acting Deputy Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and in the U.S. Marine Corps. This recommendation was implemented through presidential action, as the Secret Service does not select its own director.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take: None

**PMP
Recommendation 19**

Establish a leadership development system that identifies and trains the agency’s future managers and leaders.

According to the PMP, “To promote from within and move the agency forward, however, the Secret Service needs to do a better job of identifying future leaders and preparing them for the role.”

Status: Implementation in progress.

Actions Taken by the Secret Service

Summary: The Secret Service has taken steps to improve its leadership development system and has provided leadership training at different levels with a focus on first-line supervisors. The agency is also developing the “Framework for Leadership Development,” which is to identify courses and training opportunities to promote leadership skills at all levels.

Details:

- The Secret Service adopted the DHS Leadership Development Program in 2015 to encourage leadership development at all levels.
- The agency has provided leadership training at different levels. For example, 409 employees have attended the Seminar for First Line Supervisors since 2015. Since 2016, 178 employees attended the Antietam Leadership Experience, which is a course for supervisors, managers, and senior team leads that focuses on leadership development and capabilities. Since 2018, 41 employees attended the

Building Leaders Training Course, which is designed for non-supervisory team leads.

- The Office of Human Resources, in coordination with the Rowley Training Center, has begun to develop a “Framework for Leadership Development” program to craft effective courses and training requirements tailored to individuals throughout their careers.
- The Secret Service put on a number of events to emphasize the importance of leadership within the agency in fiscal year 2018 as part of the DHS’s “Leadership Year,” a department-wide effort to promote leadership skills. An intranet site on Leadership Year Resources was also created to centralize information on leadership development resources. In addition, the Director of the Secret Service recorded a video message on leadership that was posted on the agency’s intranet. The agency also established a peer-to-peer award recognition program.
- The agency established the Leadership Development Council in March 2018, with representatives from each of the four occupation groups (special agents; Uniformed Division officers; Administrative, Professional, and Technical staff; and Technical Law Enforcement staff) and across all grade levels.

Additional action(s) Secret Service plans to take:

- Finalize the Framework for Leadership Development and roll out the program to the agency.
- Complete development of the Strategic Leadership Course for Managers, which is designated to be a two-week course to promote leadership and strategic planning.

Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

May 1, 2019

Nathan J. Anderson
Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Management Response to Draft Report GAO-19-415, "U.S. SECRET SERVICE: Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Protective Mission Panel Recommendations"

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appreciates the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) work in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

The Department is pleased to note GAO's positive recognition of the Secret Service's actions to fully implement eleven Protective Mission Panel (PMP) recommendations and ongoing efforts to implement the remaining eight. The Secret Service recognizes the significance of the PMP's findings and is proud of actions taken, ongoing, and planned to strengthen and maintain the agency's reputation as an elite law enforcement agency. Most notably, in response to the PMP, the Secret Service:

- Implemented continuous integrated training for protective divisions,
- Hired a Chief Operating Officer and elevated senior civilian (non-agent) executives with specialized expertise to lead key offices,
- Increased the number of special agents and Uniformed Division Officers by strengthening recruitment and hiring strategies,
- Initiated Phase I of the White House fence construction and continues to explore technological capabilities to identify and mitigate security threats,
- Improved communication between the workforce and leadership by establishing the Office of Integrity to standardize discipline throughout the agency, and
- Created the Spark! platform where employees can make suggestions, share ideas, and find solutions to elevate the mission.

The Director of the Secret Service also continues to communicate agency priorities annually by issuing priority memorandums to guide development of Secret Service Resource Allocation Plan submissions to DHS.

The Secret Service has also increased training for special agents agency wide, however, it is important to highlight that the gradual shift in special agents working more hours on protection assignments has at the same time adversely affected the Presidential Protective Division (PPD) and the Vice Presidential Protective Division (VPD) agents' ability to meet training targets. The shift is largely due to the Secret Service's ability to recognize additional protective requirements, including a larger number of permanent protectees and increased amount of travel in support of those individuals, and to allocate resources accordingly to address the associated operational tempo. The agency concurs with GAO's recommendations, but notes caution in the implication that the agency would be able to meet training requirements for protective divisions by shifting resources away from the agency's field operations, which support the protective and investigative mission.

As acknowledged by GAO, special agents in the field already spend their time performing both investigative and protective duties. Specifically, agents in field offices spend, on average, 40-60 percent of their time on protective functions. As these protective duties would still need to be performed, a quick transfer of personnel away from field offices would have negative implications on operational capacity, including that related to protection. The impending 2020 Presidential Campaign means that field offices will be increasing resources devoted to supporting protective operations occurring both in their districts and in support of candidate travel. While special agents in the field will nevertheless spend some portion of their time on investigations, it is misleading to assume that this amount could be transferred to Washington, D.C.-based protective divisions without sacrificing the operational capacity of a field office to support protection.

In addition, there are several costs the Secret Service would incur by initiating a further transfer of personnel from field operations to protective divisions. First, there would be increased Permanent Change of Station costs for which the agency would need additional funding to accommodate an increased pace of transfers. Second, this would result in changes to the career progression that the agency has developed to cycle agents through their career phases. These considerations temper the pace at which the Secret Service could reasonably implement a strategy "in the short term" (as GAO suggests) centered on reducing field and investigative capacity to bolster protective divisions.

The draft report contained two recommendations with which the Department concurs. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation. Technical comments were previously provided under separate cover.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,



JIM H. CRUMPACKER, CIA, CFE
Director
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

Attachment

**Attachment: Management Response to Recommendations
Contained in GAO-19-415**

GAO recommended that the Director of the Secret Service:

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a plan to ensure that special agents assigned to PPD and VPD reach annual training targets given current and planned staffing levels.

Response: Concur. The Secret Service's Office of Training (TNG) will work with the Office of Protective Operations to reevaluate the training metric for PPD and VPD and develop a plan focusing on increasing capacity at training facilities, achieving staffing growth, and creating efficiencies in protective division scheduling.

Additionally, and after further consideration, the agency no longer concurs with the PMP recommendation that "Presidential and Vice Presidential Protective Divisions train 25 percent of their work time." The 25 percent training target was based on an interpretation of scheduling procedure, not based on a data-driven assessment of training required for competency building, preservation of perishable skills, or validation of training quantity as it relates to job performance.

By comparison, an internal review of several police agencies, including the Arkansas State Police, Police Training Commission Code of Maryland Regulations, Missouri Police Officer Standards and Training, Pennsylvania Municipal Police Officers Education Training Commission, Kansas City Railway Police, and the North Carolina Training and Standards Commission, determined that many departments only require between 18 and 40 hours of in-service training each year. Using an industry standard of 1,981 average hours worked per year by employee, this equates to between 0.9 percent and 2.0 percent of work time spent in a training status.

In 2014, the PMP recommended that the 25 percent training quantity is more appropriate for the PPD and VPD due to their level of proficiency being more aligned with specialized tactical teams than with general uniformed police training standards. However, benchmarks for the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) community are set forth by the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA). The 2018 NTOA's Suggested SWAT Best Practices and NTOA Tactical Response and Operations Standards recommended 40 training hours a month, or a total of 480 hours annually, which equates to the 25 percent quantity. It must be stressed that this amount is for full-time tactical teams who solely perform tactical duties.

Based on the varied responsibilities of PPD and VPD personnel, to include working physical protection and conducting protective advances, their roles should be seen more comparable to part-time tactical teams. Part-time, or collateral duty, tactical teams are

4

recommended to train for 16 hours a month, or 192 hours a year, equating to 9.6 percent of work time. In addition, it should be noted that the tactical elements of the Secret Service, such as the Counter Assault Team, Emergency Response Team, and Counter Sniper Team, etc., have training quantities which exceed the above, comparable part-time teams.

It should also be noted that achieving a 25 percent quantity of training hours would be detrimental to multiple elements within the Secret Service, most notably PPD, VPD, and the James J. Rowley Training Center (RTC). To achieve the 25 percent goal, each PPD and VPD agent would need to spend approximately 57 days per year in training. Based on the fourth shift training model, PPD and VPD are required to train two weeks every other month. The operational tempo of these respective details is such that all personnel are required to adhere to a 25 percent Working Day Off (WDO) schedule. In other words, for each pay period of four days off, all personnel receive only three. Adding a 25 percent training requirement to the current staffing model, using operational tempo levels from January through March of 2019, would result in a 31 to 56 percent WDO schedule for PPD personnel and a 26 to 61 percent WDO schedule for VPD personnel. At the high end of these ranges, personnel would only receive approximately 3 days off per month.

As such, the Secret Service will complete a study to determine the number of personnel that would be required for each division to achieve the proper amount of training for PPD and VPD special agents. The study will include the amount of hours required for each division and the overall hiring goals for the agency.

Estimated Completion Date (ECD): January 31, 2020.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a policy that documents the process for collecting complete Uniformed Division [UD] officer training data and establishes the types of information that should be collected.

Response: Concur. TNG will develop more rigorous and uniform standards for collecting and reporting training data related to the UD branch. TNG is currently implementing numerous data collection improvements that will significantly enhance the data reporting process.

The mandated Performance and Learning Management System (PALMS) currently captures the majority of formal training occurring at either RTC or the individual UD branch. PALMS also is now able to capture training hours for 20 formalized on-the-job-training (OJT) programs for officers assigned to the UD White House, Foreign Missions, and Naval Observatory Branches, or one of the Special Operations Branch specialized units. Additional formalized OJT programs are being reviewed and will be integrated within PALMS. Approximately 19 Micro-Training Courses (also known as Roll Call Training) are currently captured within PALMS.

The Secret Service continues to add training programs to PALMS. During the past three months, the RTC Registrar's Office has partnered with RTC sections to create structured training programs. RTC has identified training coordinators and training program managers to create, enroll, and graduate Secret Service employees in various RTC training events. Additionally, RTC has partnered with the Secret Service's Criminal Investigative Division, Asset Forfeiture Branch, and the Office of Human Resources to document training in their respective areas. RTC's efforts have resulted in an 18 percent increase in the number of training courses documented from January to February 2019 and a 54 percent increase in the number of training courses documented from February to March 2019.

Currently, PALMS is not able to capture UD training hours that are unofficial, i.e., hours of training that take place when a person newly assigned to an office is trained for that new assignment. Capturing hours of that nature is not within the intended scope of PALMS, however, initiatives are underway to capture those hours. For example, the 2019 Branch Combined Training spreadsheet captures all training from the individual UD branches. It can be designed to capture informal or OJT hours. Hours that are provided on this spreadsheet are gathered in collaboration with the training official assigned to the UD Deputy Chief's office and the members of the branch Assignments and Scheduling office.

Additionally, initial research is being conducted with the Enterprise Personnel Scheduling System (EPS) to determine if EPS can capture all forms of training activity in a single database with user-friendly data-entry options. TNG is also piloting an initiative to expand the use of reporting methods for all employees' timecards within the WebTA database. This will involve expanded use of training reporting codes or "Q Codes." The Q Code initiative will allow the Secret Service to capture all training hours, to include instructor-led, OJT, in-service, informal, etc., for all employees. This method will be more comprehensive than the data set obtained through the Man-hours Reporting System used and referenced for the GAO report. The Q Card Score Sheet will separate training hours based on job series, activities, directorates and protective details to include PPD, VPD and the Special Operations Division.

The Secret Service expects to fully review the EPS system within the next 2 months, with a determination for potential implementation following thereafter. The Q Code initiative will be presented to the USSS Executive Resources Board no later than May 31, 2019 with a potential implementation in late June 2019. Overall, the Secret Service anticipates these efforts resulting in a more accurate and expansive method for reporting UD training.

ECD: October 31, 2020.

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Nathan Anderson, (202) 512-3841 or andersonn@gao.gov.

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact above, Joseph P. Cruz (Assistant Director), Kisha Clark (Analyst-in-Charge), Willie Commons III, Elizabeth Dretsch, Eric Hauswirth, and Eric Warren made key contributions to this report.

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