



Highlights of [GAO-08-914T](#), a testimony to Chair and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) is responsible for providing physical security and law enforcement services to about 9,000 General Services Administration (GSA) facilities. To accomplish its mission of protecting GSA facilities, FPS currently has an annual budget of about \$1 billion, about 1,100 employees, and 15,000 contract guards located throughout the country.

GAO was asked to provide information and analysis on challenges FPS faces including ensuring that it has sufficient staffing and funding resources to protect GSA facilities and the over one million federal employees as well as members of the public that work in and visit them each year. GAO discusses (1) FPS's operational challenges and actions it has taken to address them, (2) funding challenges, and (3) how FPS measures the effectiveness of its efforts to protect GSA facilities. This testimony is based on our recently issued report ([GAO-08-683](#)) to this Subcommittee.

## What GAO Recommends

In our recently issued report, GAO recommended, among other things, that the Secretary of DHS direct the Director of FPS to develop and implement a strategic approach to better manage its staffing resources, evaluate current and alternative funding mechanisms, and develop appropriate performance measures. DHS agreed with the recommendations.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-914T](#). For more information, contact Mark L. Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or [goldsteinm@gao.gov](mailto:goldsteinm@gao.gov).

## HOMELAND SECURITY

### The Federal Protective Service Faces Several Challenges That Raise Concerns About Protection of Federal Facilities

#### What GAO Found

FPS faces several operational challenges that hamper its ability to accomplish its mission and the actions it has taken may not fully resolve these challenges. FPS's staff has decreased by about 20 percent from fiscal years 2004 through 2007. FPS has also decreased or eliminated law enforcement services such as proactive patrol in many FPS locations. Moreover, FPS has not resolved longstanding challenges, such as improving the oversight of its contract guard program, maintaining security countermeasures, and ensuring the quality and timeliness of building security assessments (BSA). For example, one regional supervisor stated that while reviewing a BSA for an address he personally visited he realized that the inspector completing the BSA had falsified the information because the inspector referred to a large building when the actual site was a vacant plot of land owned by GSA. To address some of these operational challenges, FPS is currently changing to an inspector based workforce, which seeks to eliminate the police officer position and rely primarily on FPS inspectors for both law enforcement and physical security activities. FPS is also hiring an additional 150 inspectors. However, these actions may not fully resolve the challenges FPS faces, in part because the approach does not emphasize law enforcement responsibilities.

Until recently, the security fees FPS charged to agencies have not been sufficient to cover its costs and the actions it has taken to address the shortfalls have had adverse implications. For example, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) transferred emergency supplemental funding to FPS. FPS restricted hiring and limited training and overtime. According to FPS officials, these measures have had a negative effect on staff morale and are partially responsible for FPS's high attrition rates. FPS was authorized to increase the basic security fee four times since it transferred to DHS in 2003, currently charging tenant agencies 62 cents per square foot for basic security services. Because of these actions, FPS's collections in fiscal year 2007 were sufficient to cover costs, and FPS projects that collections will also cover costs in fiscal year 2008. However, FPS's primary means of funding its operations—the basic security fee—does not account for the risk faced by buildings, the level of service provided, or the cost of providing services, raising questions about equity. Stakeholders also expressed concern about whether FPS has an accurate understanding of its security costs.

FPS has developed output measures, but lacks outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of its efforts to protect federal facilities. Its output measures include determining whether security countermeasures have been deployed and are fully operational. However, FPS does not have measures to evaluate its efforts to protect federal facilities that could provide FPS with broader information on program outcomes and results. FPS also lacks a reliable data management system for accurately tracking performance measures. Without such a system, it is difficult for FPS to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its efforts, allocate its limited resources, or make informed risk management decisions.