Why This Matters

The component agencies that make up the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rely heavily on information technology (IT) to perform a wide range of mission operations. To support its mission, DHS had an IT budget of approximately $6 billion for fiscal year 2011.

The primary mission of the Chief Information Officer is to lead, govern, integrate, and manage IT functions throughout the Department. Given the size and significance of DHS' investment in IT, effective management of IT programs and expenditures is critical.

DHS Response

The DHS Deputy Under Secretary for Management concurred with our recommendation and stated that the Office of the Chief Information Officer is firmly integrated with the processes for making budget, financial, and program management decisions within the agency.

We do not agree that the Chief Information Officer is, as yet, "firmly integrated" into the DHS IT budget process. We determined that the Chief Information Officer needs to participate earlier in the budget planning process to ensure that component IT budget plans align with DHS goals and objectives.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@dhs.gov

DHS Information Technology Management Has Improved, But Challenges Remain

What We Determined

The DHS Chief Information Officer has made improvements since we last conducted an audit on implementing an effective information technology management program in 2008. The Chief Information Officer has increased oversight and authority by reviewing DHS component programs and acquisitions, enabling the Chief Information Officer to make strategic recommendations to reduce costs and duplication. Also, the Department has achieved some infrastructure integration goals through data center and network consolidation. Ultimately, the Department expects cost savings through improved information sharing and disaster recovery capabilities. Additionally, the Department matured key information technology management functions, such as portfolio management.

However, we identified areas for improvement and a need for:

1) Recruiting applicants with the necessary skills to perform certain management functions.

2) Revising the budget review process to enable the Chief Information Officer to identify and resolve issues before component investments are finalized.

What We Recommend

Department of Homeland Security Deputy Under Secretary for Management:

Assign the DHS Chief Information Officer centralized control over the Department's IT budget planning process to review, guide, and approve IT investments.