

Duplicative Federal Programs

In his 2011 State of the Union Address, President Obama pledged to eliminate and consolidate duplicative programs, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued two reports finding the federal government could save hundreds of billions of dollars by eliminating duplication and overlap.

The federal government wastes more than billions a year on programs with duplicative and overlapping missions. This legislation would begin to recapture just a small fraction of the amount being wasted by the federal government on duplicative and overlapping programs.

With the release GAO's 2012 report, combined with last year's recommendations, Congress and the administration have been given extensive details in 132 areas of government duplication and opportunities for significant cost savings, with dozens recommendations for how to address the duplication and find these savings.

The report also provides a very clear and concise listing of dozens of areas ripe for reform and in need of collaboration from members on both sides of the aisle, to find solutions to address these issues.

Both Republicans and Democrats said GAO's first report on duplication would serve as a roadmap for extensive federal savings, to help put us on a path of fiscal solvency and begin reducing our deficit.

These pledges were quickly set aside, and exchanged for partisan bickering and a refusal to find even the simplest areas of commonality.

Congress is looking into a future of trillion dollar deficits and a national debt quickly headed toward \$20 trillion.

Our nation is not on the verge of bankruptcy—it is already bankrupt. We have maxed out our own credit cards and are now living off our children's credit cards, while funding a government with so many duplicative programs they cannot even all be written down in a more than 420 page report.

GAO's work presents Washington with literally hundreds of options for areas in which we could make a decision now to start finding savings, potentially hundreds of billions of dollars.

The following outlines dozens of examples of overlap, as exposed by GAO, including hundreds of duplicative government programs costing taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars every year, yet producing few measurable results.

| Program Area | Programs | Agencies | Total Spending |
|--|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Financial Literacy | 15 | 13 | \$30 million |
| Green Buildings | 94 | 11 | *\$1 billion |
| Housing Assistance | 160 | 20 | \$170 billion |
| Department of Justice Grant Programs | 253 | 10 | \$3.9 billion |
| Diesel Emissions | 14 | 3 | \$1.4 billion over 5 years |
| Early Learning and Child Care | 50 | 9 | \$16 billion |
| Employment Assistance for Disabled Individuals | 50 | 9 | \$3.5 billion |
| Surface Transportation | 55 | 5 | \$43 billion |
| Support of Entrepreneurs | 53 | 4 | \$2.6 billion |
| STEM Education Programs | 209 | 13 | \$3.1 billion |
| Unmanned Aircraft Programs | 15 | 5 | \$37 billion over 5 years |
| Domestic Food Assistance | 18 | 3 | \$62.5 billion |
| Homeless Programs | 21 | 7 | \$2.9 billion |
| Transportation Services for Transportation-Disadvantaged Persons | 80 | 8 | *\$2 billion |
| Job Training and Employment | 47 | 9 | \$18 billion |
| Teacher Quality | 82 | 10 | \$4 billion |
| Food Safety | 30 | 15 | \$1.6 billion |
| Military and Veterans Health Service | | 4 | \$49 billion |
| Economic Development | 80 | 4 | \$6.5 billion |
| US-Mexico Border Region Water Needs | | 7 | \$1.4 billion over 8 years |
| Reducing Reliance on Petroleum Fuel for Federal Fleet | 5 | 20 | *\$50 million |
| Electronic Health Records Systems for Veterans & Military | 10 | 2 | \$2.6 billion over 13 years |
| Justice Department Explosives Investigations | 4 | 2 | \$35 million |
| Sharing Security Information | 3 | 2 | \$450 million |
| Defense Language and Cultural Training | 18 | 1 | *\$30 million |
| Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Efforts | 6 | 1 | \$6.5 billion |
| Training to Identify Fraudulent Travel Documents | 7 | 3 | *\$20 million |
| FEMA Preparedness Grants | 17 | 1 | \$2.7 billion |
| Nuclear Nonproliferation | 21 | 5 | *\$90 million |

Financial Literacy

15 programs within 13 Departments, over \$30.7 million in FY 2010

Federal Reserve, 1 program
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1 program
Department of Agriculture, 1 program
Department of Defense, 1 program
Department of Education, 2 programs
Department of Health and Human Services, 1 program
Department of Labor, 2 programs
Department of the Treasury, 1 program
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 1 program
Federal Trade Commission, 1 program
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 1 program
Securities and Exchange Commission, 1 program
Social Security Administration, 1 program¹

15 duplicative programs: GAO found 15 financial literacy programs operated by 13 different federal agencies. However, a 2011 survey conducted by the Departments of Treasury and Education found 56 financial literacy programs operated by 20 different federal agencies. “Four federal agencies and one government-chartered nonprofit corporation provide various forms of housing counseling to consumers- Department of Defense, Housing and Urban Development, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of the Treasury, and NeighborWorks America.”²

Costing over \$30.7 million a year: GAO estimates the cost of these programs was \$30.7 million in FY 2010. GAO is still working on estimates for the cost of financial literacy programs through the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, which were created in July 2010. In addition to funding for financial literacy programs, “federal agencies spent about \$136.6 million in FY 2010 on housing counseling.”

Unknown Effectiveness of Programs: Very little research has been done on the effectiveness of these programs or which strategies are more effective in teaching financial literacy.

Government continues to add new financial literacy programs: The Dodd-Frank Act created a Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to “improve financial literacy through activities including opportunities for consumers to access, among other things, financial counseling; information to assist consumer with understanding credit products, histories, and scores; information about saving and borrowing tools; and assistance in developing long-term savings

² GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

strategies. This office overlaps the role of the Office of Financial Education and Financial Access within the Department of the Treasury.

Green Building

94 programs under 11 Departments, unknown cost to the federal government

Department of Agriculture, 8 programs

Department of Defense, 1 program

Department of Education, 2 programs

Department of Energy, 17 programs

Department of Health and Human Services, 1 program

Department of Housing and Urban Development, 29 programs

Department of Transportation, 5 programs

Department of the Treasury, 8 programs

Environmental Protection Agency, 18 programs

National Institute of Standards and Technology, 3 programs

Small Business Administration, 2 programs

No definition of what green building: There is no generally accepted definition for green building, but GAO suggests that it generally includes one or more of the following elements:

- energy conservation or efficiency measures
- indoor environmental quality measures
- water conservation or efficiency measures
- integrated design principles
- sustainable siting or location measures
- measures to reduce the environmental impact of materials

Due to the lack of a standard definition for green building, several different regional and national standards for builders and developers are used to certify whether a particular building is a green building. One of the more popular standards is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system which was developed and administered by the U.S. Green Building Council.

94 duplicative programs: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created “to consolidate in one agency a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection” yet, GAO reported finding 94 initiatives, operated through 11 agencies, promoting green building. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Energy operate two-thirds of the green building programs. Forty-seven of the programs are grants, 9 programs provide loans, 5 offer tax credits, three offer tax deductions, and 45 initiatives offer technical assistance.

Unknown cost to the federal government: The agencies running the green building programs do not keep track of green building funds which makes it impossible to determine the cost of these programs.

Unknown results: Only about a third of the programs have goals and performance measures in place, “therefore, the results of most initiatives and their related investments in green building

are unknown.” GAO reported that “leading organizations commonly define clear goals and related outcomes, measure performance to gauge progress, and use performance information to assess the results of their efforts and the related investment.” “Agencies and programs working collaboratively can often achieve more public value than when they work in isolation.”³

³ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

Housing Assistance

160 programs and tax expenditures within 20 Departments and agencies, \$170 billion in FY2010

Department of Housing and Urban Development, 89 programs

Department of Labor, 1 program

Department of Agriculture, 22 programs

Department of Veteran Affairs, 3 programs

Internal Revenue Service, 15 programs

Federal Home Loan Banks, 2 programs

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, 1 program

Department of the Treasury, 8 programs

Federal Reserve System, 2 programs

Department of the Interior, 1 program

Miscellaneous Agencies, 16 programs

160 duplicative programs: Since the 1930s, the federal government has been involved in supporting affordable housing through the establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Without proper oversight, the federal government's involvement has ballooned into a puzzle of 160 overlapping and duplicative programs, administered through 20 agencies, intended to encourage homeownership and provide affordable rental housing for low-income families.

Thirty-nine programs, tax expenditures, and other tools provide assistance for buying, selling or financing a home, and eight programs and tax expenditures provide assistance for rental property owners. GAO found a total of 23 federal housing programs that target or have special features for the elderly. Specifically, one HUD and one USDA program target the elderly exclusively, while three HUD programs target the elderly and disabled. The remaining 18 programs serve a variety of household types but have special features for elderly households, such as income adjustments that reduce their rents. In addition, HUD operates the Native American Housing Block Grant and the Indian Community Development Block Grant while the VA runs the Native American Veterans Direct Loan Program, all directed at providing affordable housing to Native Americans.

Costing \$170 billion a year: In FY2010 alone, housing programs cost the federal government \$170 billion, including \$132 billion in tax expenditures.

Inconclusive data on effectiveness: Data on the effectiveness of these programs is often inconclusive. For example, some studies show that the mortgage interest deduction, the single largest housing-related tax expenditure costing \$88 billion in FY 2011, increases homeownership, while other studies suggest that the deduction actually increases home prices

which negatively affects homeownership rates. However, the federal government has continued to expand housing assistance programs in recent years. In response to the recent housing crisis, the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve invested over \$1.67 trillion in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac which issue and guarantee mortgage-backed securities. Today, nearly all mortgages are directly or indirectly supported by the federal government.

Department of Justice Grants

253 grants through 10 different offices, \$3.9 billion in FY 2010

Grants for Victims Assistance, 56 grants

Technology and Forensics, 41 grants

Juvenile Justice, 33 grants

Enhancing Policing, 23 grants

Justice Information Sharing, 12 grants

Courts, 21 grants

Community Crime Prevention Strategies, 17 grants

Mental Illness, Substance Abuse, and Crime, 8 grants

Corrections, Recidivism, and Reentry, 20 grants

Multipurpose, 22 grants

253 Duplicative Programs: The Department of Justice (DOJ) administers 253 grants for crime prevention, law enforcement, and crime victim services through the Office of Justice Programs, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Community Oriented Policing Services Office. These three offices awarded over 11,000 grant awards in 2010, but GAO reported that DOJ officials do not track the flow of grants to subgrantees and do not know for what purposes and activities the subgrantees are using the money. DOJ officials even told GAO that they encourage applicants to apply for as many DOJ grants as possible.

Costs \$3.9 billion a year: The DOJ gave out \$3.9 billion in grants in 2010, and since 2005, the DOJ has been given \$30 billion for grants. One grant recipient told GAO that they had received so much money from the DOJ that they planned on returning some of the money because it was more than they needed.

Excessive Duplication: The DOJ does not assess or evaluate its grant programs to determine if they overlap or duplicate each other or to determine where possible, they should combine and consolidate grant programs. GAO found instances where the DOJ awarded multiple grants “to the same applicants whose applications described similar- and in some cases, the same- purposes for using the grant funds.”⁴ In addition, grant recipients may choose to give a portion of their grants to subgrantees. Those subgrantees may also directly apply for grants from the DOJ. GAO

⁴ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

reports that the DOJ is “at risk of unintentionally awarding funding from multiple grant programs to grant recipients in the same communities for the same or similar purposes because it does not consistently and routinely check for any unnecessary duplication in grant application.”

Federal Programs to Reduce Exhaust from Diesel Engines

14 Programs in 3 Departments, \$1.4 billion from FY 2007-2011

Department of Transportation

- **Federal Transit Administration**, 6 Programs
- **Federal Highway Administration**, 3 Programs
- **Federal Aviation Administration**, 1 Program

Department of Energy, 3 Programs

Environmental Protection Agency, 1 Program

14 Diesel Emission Programs: The federal government operates 14 different programs administered through the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency, to reduce diesel emissions. 13 of the programs provide grants and one program provides loans for this purpose. GAO reports that each program overlaps with at least one other program “in the specific activities they fund, the program goals, or the eligible recipients of funding.”⁵

Costs billions to taxpayers: From 2007 to 2011, these diesel emissions programs cost at least \$1.4 billion. In addition, three tax expenditures to reduce mobile source diesel emission cost at least \$510 million in forgone tax revenue in FY 2010.

Highly Duplicative: The GAO found several instances where multiple grants were awarded to the same recipient for the same type of activities. In one instance, a state transportation agency received \$5.4 million from DOT’s Transit Investments in Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction program, \$3.5 million from DOT’s Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program, and \$2.3 million from DOT’s Clean Fuels Grants program for hybrid diesel-electric buses.

Poor Performance Evaluations: Only about half of the programs collect any information relating to the performance of the programs’ grants or loans. In addition, agencies rarely collaborate making it more difficult to determine the effectiveness of these programs. GAO reported that “uncoordinated program efforts can waste scarce funds, confuse and frustrate program customers, and limit the overall effectiveness of the federal effort.”⁶

⁵ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

⁶IBID

Early Learning and Child Care

45 programs under 8 Departments, \$13.3 billion in FY 2010
5 tax expenditures, \$3.1 billion in foregone revenue in FY 2010

Department of Education, 19 programs
Department of Health and Human Services, 9 programs
Department of the Interior, 3 programs
General Services Administration, 2 programs
Appalachian Regional Commission, 1 program
Department of Agriculture, 4 programs
Department of Justice, 3 programs
Department of Labor, 4 programs

45 different programs: The federal government operates 45 programs, and five tax provisions to encourage early learning and child care for children under the age of five. These programs fall under the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Interior, Justice, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, the General Services Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Five of these programs provide services to low-income children, and numerous programs within the Departments of Education and Interior provide assistance to Indian children.

Costs \$13.3 billion: Federal programs for early learning and child care received at least \$13.3 billion in FY2010. The five tax provisions “accounted for at least \$3.1 billion of forgone tax revenue” in FY2010. Head Start, the largest program, spent \$7.2 billion in FY 2010.

Effects of this duplication: GAO reported that “fragmentation and program overlap can create an environment in which programs may not serve children and families as efficiently and effectively as possible,” as well as adding administrative costs. In addition “it may be possible for some families to receive benefits through both tax provisions and federal early learning and child care programs in a particular year.”⁷

⁷ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

Employment for People with Disabilities

50 Programs in 9 Departments, \$3.5 billion in FY 2010

Department of Agriculture, 1 program

Department of Defense, 9 programs

Department of Education, 10 programs

Department of Health and Human Services, 5 programs

Department of Labor, 15 programs

Department of Veterans Affairs, 4 programs

Social Security Administration, 6 programs

U.S. AbilityOne Commission, 1 program

Internal Revenue Service, 1 program

50 Overlapping and Duplicative Programs: GAO reported finding 50 different programs supporting employment for people with disabilities. The Department of Defense requested that two additional programs be added to this list, on which GAO will issue a later report. These 50 programs are operated by nine federal agencies and are overseen by an even greater number of congressional committees. 18 programs are specifically for veterans and service members, and 6 are for students and young adults, five of which all provide employment counseling, assessment, and case management. 22 of the 50 programs reported that they did not track or monitor any outcome measures.

Cost was \$3.5 billion in FY2010: The federal government spent \$3.5 billion in FY2010 to support employment for people with disabilities, yet in December 2011 the unemployment rate among people with disabilities was 13.5% (as compared to 8.1% for people without disabilities).

Lack of a Definition: There is no government-wide definition of disability which has resulted in varied definitions being used by different agencies and departments. 20 percent of the programs operate without any definition of disability. GAO's report that these fragmented programs "do not coordinate effectively could waste scarce funds, confuse and frustrate program beneficiaries, and limit the overall effectiveness of the federal effort."⁸

Congress and the Administration have failed to take action: For 15 years, GAO has reported on the "need for better coordination among all disability programs to mitigate fragmentation, overlap, and potential for duplication." Congress and the Administration have failed to take any action to implement GAO's recommendations. In fact, the Department of Education proposed eliminating or consolidating three of its programs into the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program to reduce duplication and administrative costs, yet Congress appropriated funds for each of the three programs in FY2012.

⁸ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

Surface Freight Transportation

55 programs under 5 administrations within the Dept of Transportation, \$43 billion in FY 2010**

Department of Transportation

- **Federal Highway Administration**, 48 Programs
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration**, 2 Programs
- **Federal Railroad Administration**, 2 Programs
- **Maritime Administration**, 2 Programs
- **Office of the Secretary**, 1 Program

No clearly defined role: The federal government does not have a clear role or strategy for surface freight transportation resulting in dozens of programs with overlapping and duplicative roles in promoting passenger and freight mobility. According to GAO, “this fragmented structure makes it difficult to determine the types of freight projects that are funded and their impact on overall freight mobility.” For example, the Federal Railroad Administration’s Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program and the Federal Highway Administration’s Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Program both provide loans for freight rail infrastructure.

Unknown Cost: GAO reported that the Federal Highway Administration could not determine the cost of surface freight transportation programs because highway projects benefit both passenger and freight vehicles and freight costs cannot be isolated. Program funds for highways are given to states based on formulas rather than based on performance or need.

****Recent Congressional Actions:** On March 14th, 2012, the Senate passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) to reauthorize the surface transportation programs and activities for two years. The bill reduces the number of highway transportation programs from roughly 90 down to 30. However, these consolidations do not lead to any reduction in overall spending. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), “MAP-21 is a two year reauthorization bill that basically funds the Federal-Aid Highway Program at the baseline level, adjusted for inflation.”^[1]

^[1] “Surface Transportation Reauthorization Legislation in the 112th Congress: Summary of Selected Major Provisions,” The Congressional Research Service, December 14, 2011, page 13.

Support for Entrepreneurs

53 Programs in 4 Departments, \$2.6 billion in FY 2010

Department of Commerce

- **Economic Development Administration**, 6 programs
- **Minority Business Development Agency**, 2 programs

Department of Agriculture, 14 Programs

Department of Housing and Urban Development, 12 Programs

Small Business Administration, 19 Programs

53 different programs: Four different agencies and departments operate 53 programs to help entrepreneurs. GAO reported that these programs, run by the Departments of Commerce, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Agriculture (USDA), and the Small Business Administration (SBA), overlap in their purpose resulting in inefficiency and compromising their effectiveness. Thirty-six of the programs provide technical assistance such as “business training and counseling and research and development support.” Thirty-three programs provide loans and grants for entrepreneurs, and seven programs help entrepreneurs qualify for government contracts. Not only is there duplication across agencies and departments, but duplication exists within each agency. For example, the “SBA and USDA both have 5 programs that only provide financial assistance, while HUD has 3.” Many of these programs are targeted towards economically disadvantaged populations.

\$2.6 billion a year: These programs spent an estimated \$2.6 billion in FY2010.

No measure for success: Some of these programs do track the number of businesses they have assisted and the amount of money they provided in loans, but the programs do not track measurements like the number of defaults, or loans that are in good standing in order to determine the effectiveness of these programs. 39 of the programs have never conducted a performance evaluation, “or have conducted only one in the past decade.” Conducting performance evaluations and tracking defaults and loans in good standing would help program administrators improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government’s entrepreneurial assistance programs.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education

209 programs in 13 Departments, \$3.1 billion in FY 2010

NASA, 9 Programs

National Science Foundation, 37 Programs

Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 3 Programs

Department of Agriculture, 11 Programs

Department of Commerce, 19 Programs

Department of Defense, 19 Programs

Department of Education, 12 Programs

Department of Energy, 29 Programs

Department of Health and Human Services, 46 Programs

Department of Homeland Security, 5 Programs

Department of Interior, 3 Programs

Department of Transportation, 6 Programs

Environmental Protection Agency, 10 Programs

209 federal STEM programs: GAO found a total of 209 federal programs designed to support science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. 170 programs serve postsecondary students, 75 programs served K-12 students, and 70 programs served K-12 teachers.

\$3.1 billion in FY2010: Through these 209 programs, the federal government invested \$3.1 billion in FY 2010 for STEM education. There is a large disparity in the size of the programs. 5 of the programs spent over \$100 million each, while nearly a third of the programs spent less than \$1 million in FY2010.

83% of programs overlap another program: GAO found that 173 of the 209 programs, or 83 percent, overlap at least one other STEM program. In addition, The Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation administer 112 STEM programs.

Congress continues expanding STEM Education without knowledge of effectiveness:

Approximately one-third of these programs were created and first funded between 2005 and 2010, but despite the number of programs we have for STEM education, the United States lags “behind students in other highly technological nations in mathematics and science achievement.”⁹

⁹ GAO-12-342SP: 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue. Government Accountability Office. February 2012.

Unmanned Aircraft Programs

15 programs within 5 categories, expected \$37.5 billion from FY2012 to FY2016

15 Overlapping Programs: GAO found 15 unmanned aircraft programs within five categories based on weight, altitude, and speed. GAO found overlap between group four and five and it is expected that another \$32.4 billion will be spent to complete these programs. Illustrative of this duplication, the Navy is planning to spend \$3 billion in order to develop its own version of the Air Force Global Hawk, rather than using the Air Force's Global Hawk. In addition to the unmanned aircraft systems, GAO found duplication and overlap between the sensors that were being developed for Army, Navy, and Air Force technologies.

\$37.5 billion between FY2012 through FY2016: GAO estimates that the cost of the current unmanned aircraft systems will exceed \$37.5 billion in FY2012-FY2016. Additionally, the sensors will cost an added \$9 billion. A Department of Defense (DOD) study showed that the DOD could have saved nearly \$1.2 billion if the Air Force used the same sensor as the Army.

Domestic Food Assistance

18 Programs in 3 Departments, \$62.5 billion in FY 2008

Agriculture Department, 15 programs

Homeland Security Department -FEMA, 1 program

HHS Administration on Aging, 2 programs

According to GAO, “The availability of multiple programs with similar benefits helps ensure that those in need have access to nutritious food, but can also increase administrative costs, which account for approximately a tenth to more than a quarter of total costs among the largest of these programs.”

15 of the programs are run by the Department of Agriculture, ranging from the SNAP program, to a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Special Milk Program.

“Little is known about the effectiveness of [11 of the 18 programs] because they have not been well studied.”

Homeless Programs

21 Programs in 7 Agencies, \$2.9 billion in FY 2009

Housing and Urban Development Department, 11 programs

Health and Human Services Department, 3 programs

Veterans Affairs Department, 2 programs

Justice Department, 1 program

Homeland Security-FEMA, 1 program

Agriculture Department, 2 programs

Interior Department, 1 program

In their 2011 review of duplication, GAO found there are 21 programs across seven agencies dedicated to providing federally funded shelter or housing assistance.

Congress is often to blame: “Fragmentation and overlap in some of these programs may be due in part to their legislative creation as separate programs under the jurisdiction of several agencies.”

“Fragmentation can create difficulties for people in accessing services as well as administrative burdens for providers who must navigate various application requirements, selection criteria, and reporting requirements.”

Fragmentation has also resulted in the collection of data with “limited usefulness.”

Transportation Services for Transportation-Disadvantaged Persons

80 Programs in 8 Agencies, billions of dollars

GAO could not determine the total federal spending provided for these 80 programs because “agencies often do not tract transportation costs from other programs costs.”

However, GAO determined 23 of the programs cost \$1.7 billion in FY 2009

Housing and Urban Development Department, 11 programs

Health and Human Services Department, 30 programs

Veterans Affairs Department, 3 programs

Homeland Security Department -FEMA, 1 program

Agriculture Department, 2 programs

Interior Department, 7 programs

Education Department, 11 programs

Labor Department, 9 programs

Transportation Department, 7 programs

“GAO and others have reported that the variety of federal programs providing transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged has resulted in fragmented services that can be difficult for clients to navigate and narrowly focused programs that may result in service gaps”.

“Further, services can be costly because of inconsistent, duplicative, and often restrictive program rules and regulations”

Job Training and Employment

47 Programs in 9 Agencies, \$18 billion in FY 2009

Health and Human Services Department, 7 programs

Veterans Affairs Department, 1 program

Defense Department, 1 program

Justice Department, 1 program

EPA, 1 program

Agriculture Department, 1 program

Interior Department, 3 programs

Education Department, 11 programs

Labor Department, 21 programs

In January 2011, GAO informed Congress that nine federal agencies spent approximately \$18 billion to administer 47 separate employment and job training programs (FY 2009).^[i]

GAO identified another 51 federal programs that could be categorized as federal job training programs, but that were ultimately excluded from its final list.^[ii]

GAO informed Congress that all but three of the 47 programs *overlap with at least one other program* in that they provide similar services to similar populations – yet maintain separate administrative structures.

Only five^[iii] of the 47 job training and employment programs GAO surveyed had an impact study^[iv] completed since 2004 to evaluate whether outcomes (i.e., such as program participants actually securing a job) resulted from the program and not another cause.

About half the programs had no performance review since 2004.

As a result, GAO finds “little is known about the effectiveness of most programs.”

Despite these findings in 2011, Congress has not eliminated or consolidated a single program on this list.

What’s more, we have added programs. For example, Congress has created a Workforce Innovation Fund to fund innovation in employment and training.

Some House members, to their credit, have tried to tackle this problem.

The House Education and Workforce Committee, led by Chairman John Kline and Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training Chairwoman Virginia Foxx, reported a bill to consolidate **37 job training programs, 29 of which were included in the GAO's 2011 report.**

The bill was discharged from five other committees of jurisdiction – no easy feat.

Congress needs to start tackling the difficult work of reforming programs – not only to save money but to also ensure they actually work well on behalf of those the programs are intended to serve.

Teacher Quality

82 Programs in 10 Agencies, \$4 billion in FY 2009

Agriculture Department, 1 program

Interior Department, 4 programs

Education Department, 64 programs

Defense Department, 3 programs

EPA, 2 programs

Other, 5 programs

State Department, 3 programs

53 of the 82 programs received less than \$50 million, yet many had their own separate administrative processes.—...there is no government wide strategy to minimize fragmentation, overlap or duplication among these many [teacher quality] programs (pg. pg. 144).||

The proliferation of programs has resulted in fragmentation that can frustrate agency efforts to administer programs in a comprehensive manner, limit the ability to determine which programs are most cost-effective, and ultimately increase program costs|| (pg. 144).

Education officials agree fragmentation has hurt efforts to improve teacher quality. What's more, —[a]ccording to Education officials, it is typically not cost effective to allocate the funds necessary to conduct rigorous evaluation of small programs; therefore, small programs are unlikely to be evaluated|| (pg 145).

GAO also notes the increased administrative costs of separately administered programs.

Food Safety

30 Food Related Laws, Managed by 15 Agencies, \$1.6 billion

In their 2011 review of duplication, GAO found, 15 federal agencies administer over 30 food-related laws.

Some of the oversight simply does not make sense. For example, the US Farm Bill assigned the United States Department of Agriculture responsibility for monitoring catfish, thus splitting seafood oversight between USDA and FDA.

The GAO report found that food safety oversight is fragmented. For example, FDA is general responsible for ensuring that...eggs are safe, wholesome and properly labeled, while USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service is responsible for the safety of eggs processed into egg products.

In another example, the USDA is responsible for the health of young chicks, while the FDA oversees the safety of the feed they eat.

Military and Veterans Health Service

4 Military Agencies and Services, \$49 billion annually

Each military service has the same health infrastructure (i.e. buildings, computers, and personal) when they all can be merged together.

“The responsibilities and authorities for DOD’s military health system are distributed among several organizations within DOD with no central command authority or single entity accountable to minimizing costs and achieving results.”

In 2006 a DOD working group developed a proposal to create a unified medical command among other alternatives. It was, however, unsuccessful in obtaining a consensus among the services of how to proceed. Thus, nothing happened.

If the DOD —had chosen to implement one of the three alternatives studied by the working group, it could have saved between \$281 million to \$460 million, according to the report.

Economic Development

80 Programs at 4 Agencies, \$6.5 billion annually

Commerce Department, 11 programs

Housing and Urban Development Department, 14 programs

Agriculture Department, 35 programs

Small Business Administration, 18 programs

There are 80 programs at 4 agencies doing economic development work for the federal government; 52 of which help with —entrepreneurial efforts and 19 with tourism.

Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), which runs —8 of the programs GAO reviewed, continues to rely on a potentially incomplete set of variables and self reported data to assess the effectiveness of grants. “The poor data —may lead to inaccurate claims about the success of the program.”

USDA’s Office of Rural Development, which administers 31 of the programs GAO reviewed, “has yet to implement the USDA Inspector General 2003 recommendations related to ensuring that data exist to measure the accomplishments of one of its largest rural business programs.”

U.S.-Mexico Border Region Water Needs

7 Agencies, \$1.4 billion from 2000 to 2008

Almost 10 years ago, federal agencies figured out that better coordination would be necessary to fix the water problem of the US/Mexico border. Unfortunately, “these program remain uncoordinated and fragmented, and their delivery continues to be inefficient and ineffective.”

One of the key problems is “because most of the seven federal agencies that provide assistance have not comprehensively assessed the needs of the region. Federal agencies have assembled data and conducted limited studies of drinking water and wastewater conditions in the border region, but the resulting patchwork of data does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the region’s needs.”

GAO also found examples where money was outright wasted:

“[W]here HUD provided a utility in Hudspeth County, Texas over \$860,000 in grant funds from 2004 to 2006 to extend water distribution and waste collection lines for residents of a community. However, through September 2009, the distribution lines remained unused because the utility did not have enough water to serve the additional households.”

Reducing Reliance on Petroleum Fuel for Federal Vehicle Fleet

5 Programs at over 20 Agencies, undetermined total cost

The government has more than 20 federal agencies focused on reducing federal dependency on petroleum for purposes of running federal vehicles.

According to GAO, “These statutes and [executive] orders were enacted and issued in a piecemeal fashion and represent a fragmented rather than integrated approach to meeting key national goals.”

“The federal government’s vehicle fleet has over 600,000 civilian and nontactical military vehicles and consumes over 963,000 gallons of petroleum-based fuel per day.”

“In fiscal year 2009, the federal government spent approximately \$1.9 billion on procuring new vehicles.”

Electronic Health Records Systems for Veterans & Military

10 Systems/Projects at 2 Departments, at least \$2.6 billion over last 13 years

Although the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) “have many common health care business needs, the departments have begun separate modernizations of their electronic health records systems. Reduced duplication in this area could save system development and operation costs while supporting higher quality health care for service members and veterans.”

“In May 2010, the departments identified 10 areas - inpatient documentation, outpatient documentation, pharmacy, laboratory, order entry and management, scheduling, imaging and radiology, third-party billing, registration, and data sharing- in which they have common business needs.”

“Moreover, the results of a 2008 study conducted for the departments found that over 97 percent of functional requirements for an inpatient electronic health record system are common to both departments.”

Justice Department Explosives Investigations

4 Programs at 2 Agencies, \$35 million in FY 2010

“In fiscal year 2009, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), both components of the Department of Justice (Justice), initiated over 1,600 cases involving explosives incidents such as actual or attempted bombings with improvised explosive devices.”

“GAO’s ongoing work on law enforcement coordination found that disputes have occurred over the past 5 years between [ATF and FBI] regarding jurisdiction of explosives investigations and there is potential for overlap.”

“A 2009 report from Justice’s Inspector General found there has been little progress since 2004 in addressing overlap and duplication.”

Defense and Homeland Security

Sharing Security Information

Three federal efforts at two agencies (TSA and DHS), costing more than \$450 million each year, are tasked with facilitating information sharing with the public transit industry.

“GAO found that this potential for overlap could overwhelm public transit agencies with similar information.”

Defense Language and Cultural Training

The Department of Defense created 18 different products or programs to teach language and culture to military of the military (and in some cases civilians).

These courses all overlap with at least one other product. The Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps each developed separate “Smart Books” through contractors at a cost of \$1.6 million that had similar content to the Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Center, who spent \$15 million on similar products.

Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Efforts

The Department of Defense spends over \$6.5 billion each year (on average) on technology and tactics to overcome the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

While the Department of Defense did create the Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO), which was funded by Congress to streamline this effort, many major counter IED missions have been funded outside of JIEDDO.

As a result DOD has no centralized database to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. The military has developed six separate systems for directed-energy weapons to counter IEDs.

Training to Identify Fraudulent Travel Documents

Seven different federal government entities across three federal agencies are involved in providing training to officials working for foreign governments to detect fraudulent travel documents.

According to GAO, State Department officials told GAO that they were not aware of how many agencies and offices were involved in providing fraudulent travel document training to foreign governments. GAO did not detail how much is spent on these efforts annually.

No official mechanism or process exists for coordinating among these agencies involved with this training.

FEMA Preparedness Grants

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) manages 17 different Department of Homeland Security preparedness grant programs, which cost taxpayers \$2.7 billion in FY 2010.

According to GAO, “FEMA does not compare and coordinate grant applications across its preparedness programs to identify potential duplication. In addition, FEMA has not established measurable goals or performance measures for preparedness capabilities to identify gaps to assist in effectively prioritizing national investments through preparedness grant programs.”

Nuclear Nonproliferation

To prevent terrorist and other adversaries from acquiring and using nuclear weapons, the United States has pursued multiple nuclear nonproliferation programs, including the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration, as well as Department of Defense, State, and DHS programs. The National Security Council has the primary responsibility to coordinate these programs.

According to GAO, altogether there are 21 government programs and offices under five federal agencies –NNSA, Defense, State, DHS, and Justice—to prevent and detect the smuggling of nuclear materials and nuclear technology trafficking.

GAO reports that these efforts are duplicative and incomplete. None of the existing strategies and plans for coordinating nonproliferation activities overseas “incorporates all of the desirable characteristics of national strategies.”

GAO further found that no single agency has been granted the lead responsibility for leading and directing federal efforts to prevent nuclear smuggling.

^[i] Government Accountability Office (GAO-11-92), “Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information on Co-Locating and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies,” January 2011.

^[iii] Government Accountability Office (GAO-11-92), “Multiple Employment and Training Programs: Providing Information on Co-Locating and Consolidating Administrative Structures Could Promote Efficiencies,” January 2011, See Appendix I.

^[iii] The five federal job training and employment programs that have had an impact study performed since 2004 include the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); WIA Adult Program; WIA Dislocated Workers; National Guard Youth Challenge Program; and Reintegration of Ex-Offenders.

^[iv] According to the GAO, many researchers consider impact studies to be the best method for determining the extent to which a program is causing participating outcomes.