

March 2010

ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

Implementation of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006





Highlights of GAO-10-365, a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) is intended to increase the transparency of and accountability for the over \$1 trillion that federal agencies award each year in contracts, loans, grants, and other awards. Among other things, the act required the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to establish, no later than January 1, 2008, a publicly accessible Web site containing data on federal awards. The act also authorized OMB to issue guidance to federal agencies on reporting award data and instructs agencies to comply with that guidance. OMB launched the site

(www.USAspending.gov) in December 2007. GAO's objectives were to determine the extent to which (1) OMB is complying with FFATA requirements to make federal award data available, (2) federal agencies are reporting required award data, and (3) inconsistencies exist between data on the Web site and records at federal agencies. To do this, GAO reviewed FFATA requirements and OMB guidance, interviewed OMB and agency officials, and examined a sample of awards reported to OMB.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that OMB, among other things, include all required data on the site, ensure complete reporting, and clarify guidance for verifying agencyreported data. In comments on a draft of this report, OMB generally agreed with GAO's findings and recommendations.

View GAO-10-365 or key components. For more information, contact David A. Powner at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.

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What GAO Found

OMB has taken steps to comply with the requirements of FFATA; of nine requirements GAO reviewed, OMB has satisfied six and partially satisfied one. For example, it established a publicly accessible Web site containing data on federal awards that allows searches of data by all required data elements and provides for totals and downloadable data. However, OMB has only partially satisfied the requirement to conduct a pilot program on collecting subaward data beginning no later than July 2007—two pilot programs began in 2008, after the statutory deadline. OMB has not yet satisfied two requirements. First, it has not included subaward data on the USAspending.gov Web site, which was required by January 2009, and it does not have a specific plan in place for collecting and reporting such data. Until OMB ensures that subaward data are included on the site, it is not fully meeting its requirements under FFATA and the usefulness of the information on the site will be limited. Second, OMB has yet to submit a required annual report to Congress detailing the use of the site and the reporting burden placed on award recipients. However, OMB officials stated that they are collecting the necessary information and plan to issue the report in 2010.

While USAspending.gov currently contains required fiscal year 2008 information on federal assistance awards from 29 agencies, 9 agencies did not report a total of 15 awards. These agencies, which include the Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, stated that they plan to report future awards as required. Nevertheless, OMB has not implemented a process to identify nonreporting agencies as originally planned and instead has relied on agencies' voluntary compliance with OMB guidance to ensure complete and accurate reporting. Without a more effective approach to ensuring that all agencies report applicable awards, the utility of USAspending.gov will be impaired by gaps in the required information.

In a random sample of 100 awards, GAO identified numerous inconsistencies between USAspending gov data and records provided by awarding agencies. Each of the 100 awards had at least one required data field that was blank or inconsistent with agency records-or for which agency records lacked sufficient information to evaluate their consistency with data on USAspending.gov. The most common data fields with inconsistencies or omissions included titles describing the purpose of the award and the city where award-funded work was to be performed. These errors can be attributed, in part, to a lack of specific OMB guidance on how agencies should fill in these fields and how they should perform the required validation of their data submissions. In addition, publicly available information that OMB provides on the completeness of agency-provided data does not address a required data field relating to the city where work for the award was to be performed. Until OMB and agencies better ensure that complete and accurate information is included on USAspending.gov, the Web site will be limited in providing the public with a view into the details of federal spending.

Contents

Letter		1
	Conclusions	3
	Recommendations for Executive Action Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	$\frac{3}{4}$
Appendix I	Briefing to Congressional Staffs on Implementation of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006	6
Appendix II	GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	51

Abbreviations

CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
FAADS	Federal Assistance Award Data System
FAST	Federal Account Symbols and Titles
FFATA	Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006
FPDS-NG	Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation
GSA	General Services Administration
NAIC	North American Industry Classification System
OMB	Office of Management and Budget

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United States Government Accountability Office Washington, DC 20548

March 12, 2010

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman Chairman The Honorable Susan M. Collins Ranking Member Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs United States Senate

The Honorable Edolphus Towns Chairman The Honorable Darrell Issa Ranking Member Committee on Oversight and Government Reform House of Representatives

To increase the transparency of and accountability for the over \$1 trillion in contracts and financial assistance awarded each year by federal agencies, Congress passed the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) in 2006.¹ Among other things, the act required the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to establish a free, publicly accessible Web site containing data on federal awards (e.g., contracts, loans, and grants) no later than January 1, 2008. In addition, OMB was required to include data on subawards by January 1, 2009. The act also authorized OMB to issue guidance and instructions to federal agencies for reporting award information and requires agencies to comply with that guidance. OMB launched the Web site—www.USAspending.gov—in December 2007.

The act also requires GAO to submit to Congress a report on compliance with the act.² Specifically, our objectives were to determine the extent to which (1) OMB is complying with the act's requirements to make federal award data available, (2) federal agencies are reporting required award data, and (3) inconsistencies exist between the data on USAspending.gov

¹Pub. L. No. 109-282, §§ 1 to 4, Sept. 26, 2006, as amended Pub. L. No. 110-252, Sec. 6202(a), June 30, 2008 (31 U.S.C. § 6101 Note).

²Pub. L. No. 109-282, Sec 4.

and records at federal agencies. To do this, we reviewed FFATA requirements and OMB guidance, interviewed OMB and agency officials, reviewed data from other federal award databases, analyzed data from OMB, and reviewed agency award documentation.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2009 to March 2010 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.

On December 18, 2009, we provided a briefing to your staffs on the results of our audit. This report includes the materials used at that briefing as well as the recommendations we are making to the Director of OMB to improve the completeness, accuracy, and usefulness of USAspending.gov. The full briefing materials, including details on our scope and methodology, are reprinted in appendix I.

In summary, our briefing made the following major points:

- OMB has taken steps to comply with the requirements of FFATA; of nine requirements we reviewed, OMB has satisfied six, partially satisfied one, and has yet to satisfy two. For example, OMB has not met the requirement to include data on subawards by January 2009 and does not yet have a plan or process in place for doing so.
- While USAspending.gov contains required fiscal year 2008 data on grants from 29 agencies, 9 agencies did not report a total of 15 awards as required. Furthermore, OMB has not implemented a process for identifying nonreporting agencies but has instead relied on voluntary agency compliance with its guidance to ensure complete reporting.
- In a random sample of 100 awards,³ we identified widespread inconsistencies between USAspending.gov data and records provided by awarding agencies. The most frequent inconsistencies occurred in certain required data fields, such as titles describing the purpose of the award and

³One transaction was randomly sampled in each of 100 randomly sampled awards. Since the number of transactions is not known for the entire population of awards, and because of the small sample size, the results are not generalizable to the population.

the city where work funded by the award was to be performed. These can be attributed in part to OMB guidance, which does not sufficiently address the completion and validation of agency data submissions. In addition, OMB's public reporting on the completeness of agency data does not address the required field relating to the city where the award-funded work is to be performed. Until these limitations in USAspending.gov are addressed, the site will not fully meet the requirements of FFATA and serve its purpose of increasing the transparency of the federal awards process.
Fulfilling FFATA's purpose of increasing transparency and accountability of federal expenditures requires that USAspending.gov contain complete and accurate information on all applicable federal awards. While OMB has taken steps to meet the requirements of the act, including establishing a publicly available and searchable Web site containing data on federal awards, the site does not yet include all of the required information, such as data on subawards. In addition, several agencies did not report awards as required, and OMB has not yet implemented a process to effectively ensure that agencies report all applicable awards. Finally, the widespread inconsistencies between USAspending.gov data and agency records suggest the need for clearer guidance on completing and validating agency data submissions. Until OMB and agencies better ensure that complete and accurate information is included on USAspending.gov, the Web site will be of limited use in providing the public with a comprehensive view into the details of federal spending and increasing the transparency and accountability of the government for how it spends taxpayer dollars.
To improve the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of all data submissions to OMB's USAspending.gov Web site, we recommend that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget take the following four actions:
develop and implement a specific plan for the collection and reporting of subaward data, including a time frame for including subaward data on USAspending.gov;develop and implement a process to regularly ensure that all federal agencies report required award information to USAspending.gov;

	• revise guidance to federal agencies on reporting federal awards to clarify
	• the requirement that award titles describe the award's purpose and
	• requirements for validating and documenting agency award data submitted by federal agencies; and
	• include information on the city where work is performed in OMB's public reporting of the completeness of agency data submissions.
Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	In oral comments on a draft of this report, the Office of Management and Budget's E-Government Portfolio Manager generally agreed with our findings and recommendations and discussed steps the agency is taking to address them. He agreed that OMB has only partially satisfied the FFATA requirements for conducting pilot programs for collecting subaward data, reporting subaward data by January 1, 2009, and submitting an annual report to specified congressional committees.
	While generally agreeing with our recommendations, the manager offered clarification on several of them. Specifically, regarding our recommendation to develop and implement a process to ensure that all federal agencies report required information to USAspending.gov, the manager stated that OMB plans to improve the completeness of federal award data by creating an online data quality dashboard of agency submissions. Regarding our recommendation to revise guidance to agencies on validating and documenting their award data, the manager commented that OMB's recently issued open government directive would address some of the concerns we raised by, among other things, requiring agencies to designate a high-level senior official to be accountable for the quality of data disseminated through USAspending.gov or other similar Web sites. He added that, consistent with the directive, OMB plans to issue additional guidance regarding agency data plans, internal controls over data quality, and a longer-term strategy for federal spending transparency. If OMB takes these steps as planned and effectively implements them, it could help improve the overall quality of federal spending data.
	In addition, regarding our recommendation to include city of performance information in OMB's public reporting of agency data submissions, the manager stated that OMB would consider this as it develops the new online data quality dashboard. The manager also identified other actions OMB is planning to improve the transparency of federal award data, such as launching an improved version of the USAspending.gov Web site in 2010.

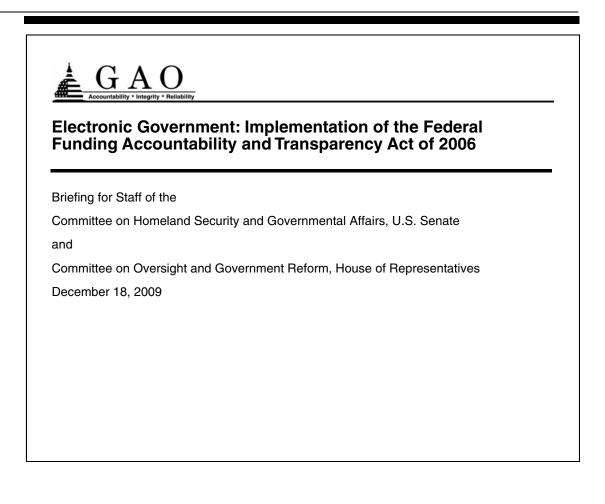
We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, the Treasury, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; the U.S. Attorney General; the Executive Director of the Broadcasting Board of Governors; the Federal Co-Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority; the Federal Co-Chair of the Denali Commission; the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank; the Acting Administrator of the General Services Administration; the Executive Director of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission; the Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board; the Director of the National Science Foundation: the Administrator of the Small Business Administration: the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission; and the President of the U.S. Institute of Peace. In addition, the report will also be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staffs have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.

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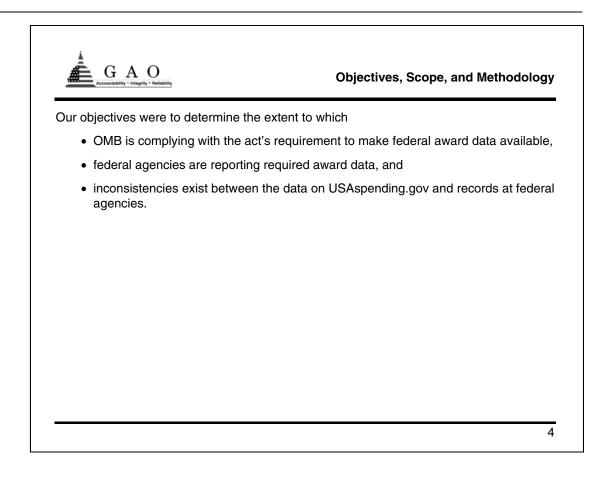
David A. Powner Director, Information Technology Management Issues

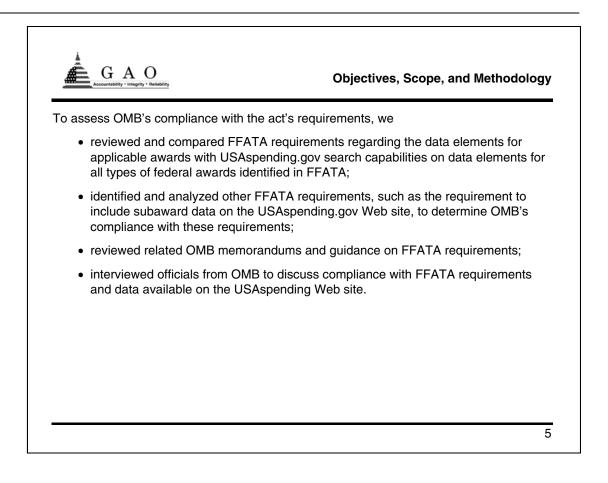
Appendix I: Briefing to Congressional Staffs on Implementation of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006

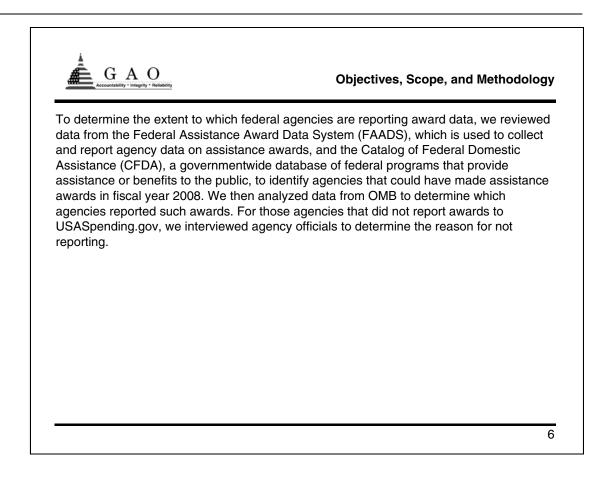


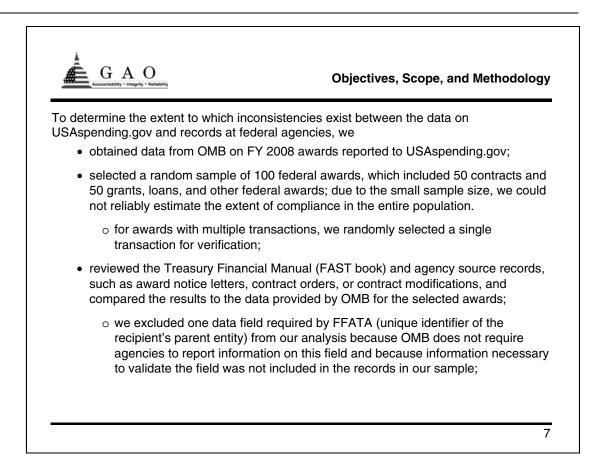
G A O	Contents
Introduction	
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	
Results in Brief	
Background	
Results	
Conclusions	
Recommendations for Executive Action	
Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	
Attachment	
1. List of Departments and Agencies in GAO Sample	
	2

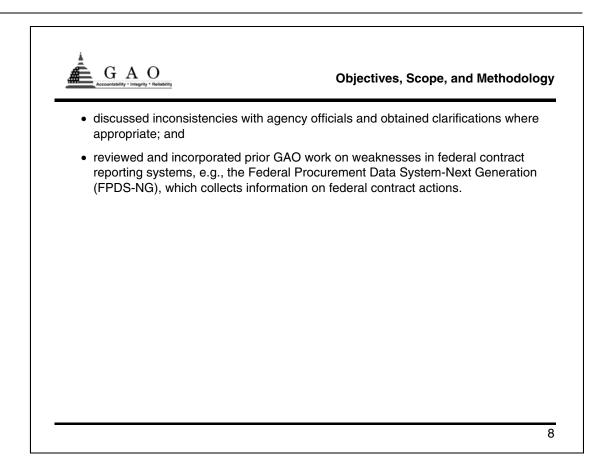
G A OIntroduction Each year, federal agencies award contracts and financial assistance amounting to over one trillion dollars. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Consolidated Federal Funds report for fiscal year 2007, about \$440 billion in contracts, \$496 billion in grants, and \$195 million in direct and guaranteed loans were awarded in that year. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)¹ was enacted in September 2006 to increase the transparency and accountability of federal government expenditures by providing access to information on federal awards through a single, searchable, publicly available Web site. Among other things, the act required the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to establish an operational Web site by January 1, 2008, that included data on federal awards in the form of several required data elements. In addition, the act required OMB to ensure that data on federal subawards were included no later than January 1, 2009. The act also authorized OMB to issue guidance and instructions to federal agencies for reporting information on awards and requires agencies to comply with that guidance. OMB launched the Web site-www.USAspending.gov-in December 2007. ¹ Pub. L. No. 109-282, Sept. 26, 2006. 3

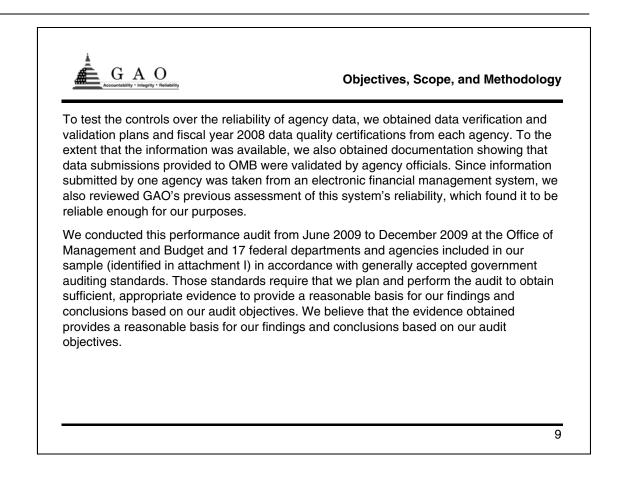


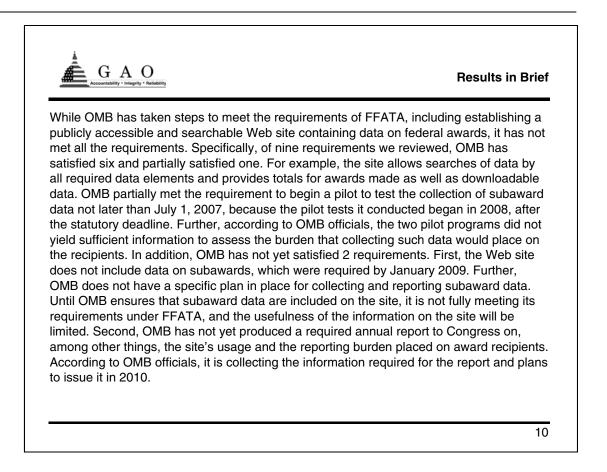


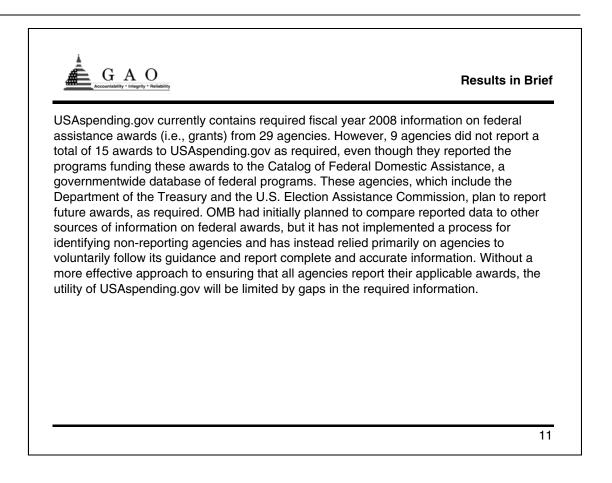


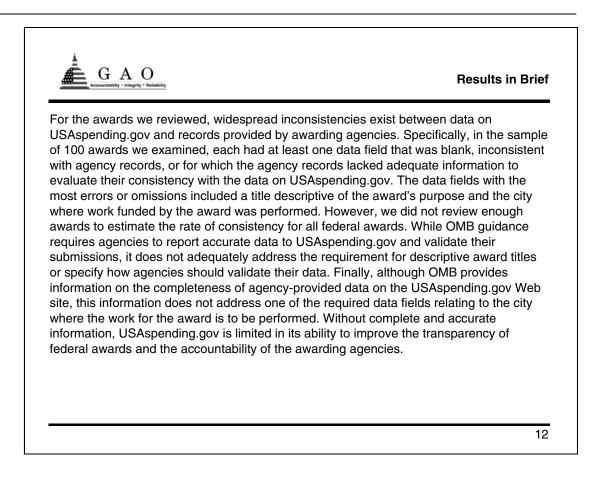


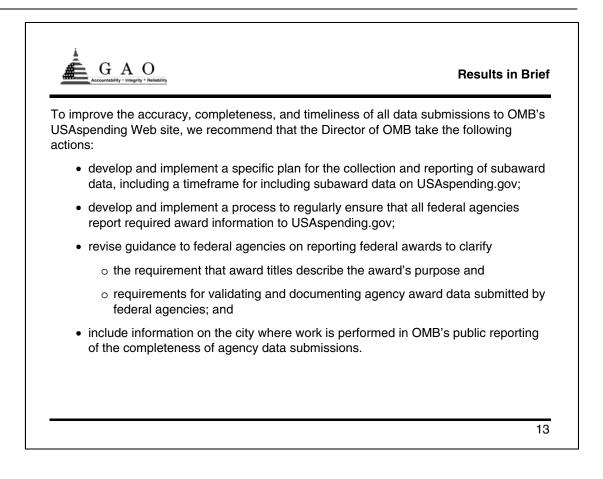








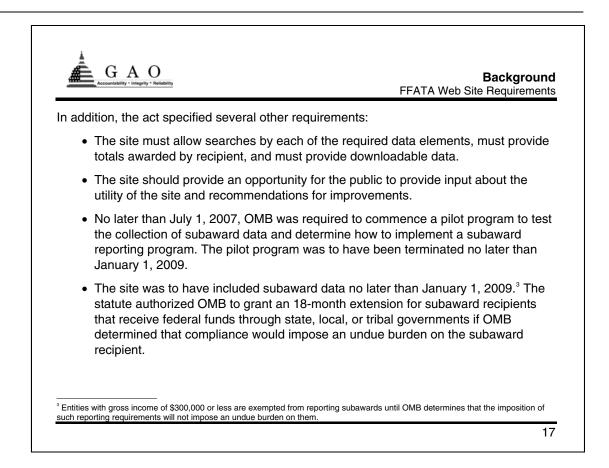


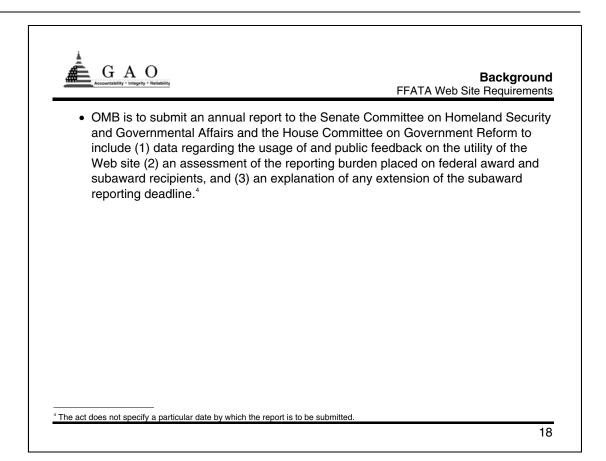


G A O**Results in Brief** In comments on a draft of this briefing, OMB officials suggested that the administration's recent open government initiative would address some of the concerns we raised about the quality of data on USAspending.gov. Among other things, this directive² requires agencies to designate a high-level senior official to be accountable for the quality and objectivity of federal spending information publicly disseminated through such public venues as USAspending.gov. The directive also states that OMB plans to issue additional guidance, including a longer-term strategy for federal spending transparency. If implemented successfully, this guidance could potentially improve the overall quality of federal spending data. However, OMB action is still needed to address the specific issues we identified. ² OMB, Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Open Government Directive, M-10-06 (Washington, D.C.: December 8, 2009) 14

	Background FFATA Web Site Requirements
number of requirements for the Office or responsibilities. Primarily, OMB was to e	Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) established a f Management and Budget as well as agency establish a free, publicly available Web site by information on federal awards, in the form of 11
added to the site within 30 days after the requiring agencies to report award data	fiscal year 2007 and later, and awards were to be e award was made. (OMB later issued guidance on the 5^{th} and 20^{th} of each month.) However, nd credit card transactions that occurred before uded.
Table 1 lists the required data elements	along with their descriptions.

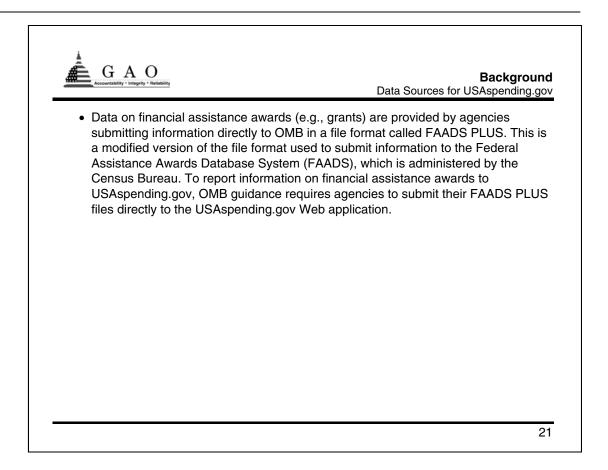
Table 1: Data Elements Specified by	FFATA
Data elements ^a	Descriptions
1. Name of the entity receiving the award	Legal name by which the entity is incorporated and pays taxes. If the entity is not incorporated, this is the legal name contained in other official filings.
2. Award amount	Amount of support provided in the award based on obligations
3. Transaction type	Specification of award type, e.g., contracts, grants, direct or guaranteed loans, and cooperative agreements
4. Funding agency	Federal departments and independent agencies
5. North American Industry Classification System (NAIC) code (for contracts)	Identification of the industry for which funds are being spent
 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number (not applicable for contracts) 	Identification of the funding agency and program
7. Program source	Accounts from which funds are drawn (i.e. source of funding for the award)
 Award title descriptive of the purposes of each funding action 	Brief descriptive title of the project that includes the objective of the award
9. Location of entity receiving the award	Address of the entity; includes sub-components: city, state, congressional district, and country
10. Primary location of performance	Location where a majority of the effort required to satisfactorily fulfill the intended purpose of the award will be completed; includes sub-components: city, state, congressional district, and country
11. Unique identifier for the award recipient and parent entity (if applicable)	Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number used to uniquely identify entities and parent entities (if applicable) doing business with the government
Sources: GAO analysis of FFATA and OMB guidance	

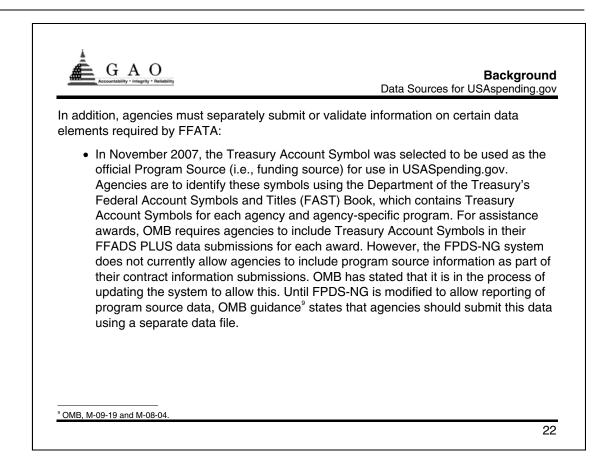




G A OBackground Agencies Required to Report Federal Award Data FFATA also requires federal agencies to comply with OMB instructions and guidance for ensuring the existence and operation of the Web site. In November 2007, March 2008, and June 2009, OMB issued guidance that requires agencies to submit timely, accurate, and complete data as prescribed by FFATA and defines award reporting requirements for USAspending.gov.⁵ ⁶ Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies: Guidance on Data Submission under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, M-09-19 (Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2009); Memorandum for Federal Agencies: Guidance on Future Data Submissions under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (Transparency Act), M-08-12 (Washington, D.C.: March 6, 2008); and Memorandum to Executive Departments and Agencies: OMB Guidance on Data Submission under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (Transparency Act), M-08-04 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 9, 2007) 19

G A OBackground Data Sources for USAspending.gov OMB guidance states that agencies are to leverage existing systems, functionality, and available data to submit data to USAspending.gov.⁶ Specifically, OMB selected a centralized solution to receive data from select systems and in specified file formats to post the data to the Web site: Contract data are imported from the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation (FPDS-NG), which collects information on contract actions, procurement trends, and achievement of socioeconomic goals, such as small business participation.⁷ OMB was responsible for establishing the system, which is administered by the General Services Administration (GSA). Since 1980, FPDS-NG and its predecessor have been the primary governmentwide contracting databases. Federal agencies are responsible for ensuring that the information reported in this database is complete and accurate.⁸ ⁶ OMB, M-08-04. ⁷ FPDS-NG can be accessed at <u>www.fpds.gov</u>. FPDS-NG data and reporting requirements for FPDS-NG are described in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 4.6. Because FPDS-NG is a direct source of data for USAspending.gov, we did not compare the data on USAspending.gov with data from FPDS-NG when analyzing the extent to which agencies reported applicable awards 20



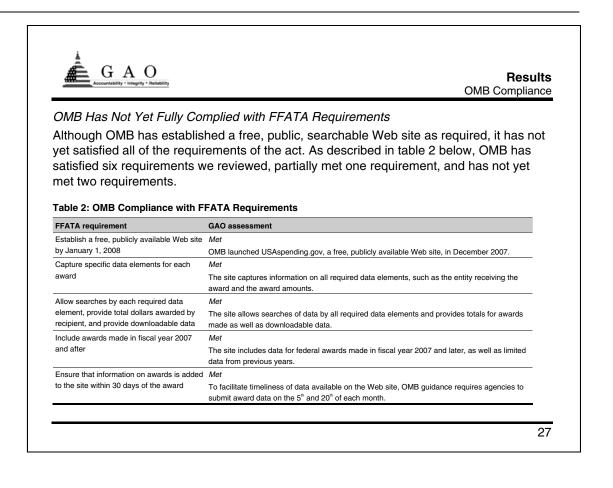


G A O Background Additional Award Reporting Agencies also report information on federal assistance award programs to other sources such as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). CFDA is a governmentwide database of federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. It contains financial and non-financial assistance programs administered by departments and establishments of the federal government. GSA maintains the CFDA database, and OMB helps to provide oversight of the collection of federal domestic assistance program data. 23

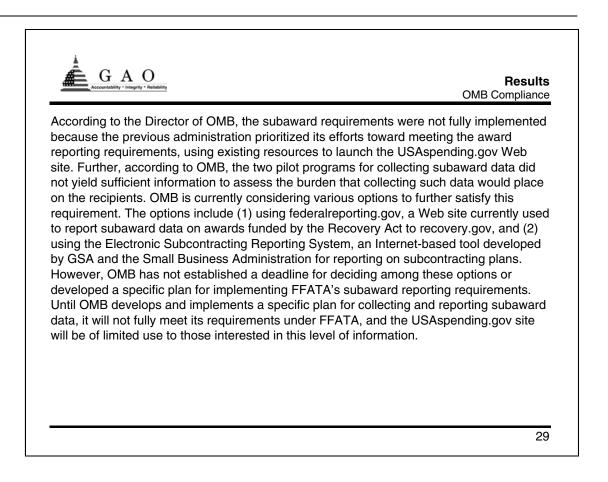
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability	Background Prior GAO Work
Since 2003, we have issued several reports on data re FPDS-NG and its predecessor, FPDS. Our reviews of o systems have revealed inaccurate and incomplete repo	contract award data in these
In 2006, we identified problems with agencies' reporting found that 44 of 86 economic development programs the report any funding data or reported incomplete or inaccon- part of fiscal years 2002 – 2004. Reasons for these ina Bureau's inability to ensure that agencies were submitte among program officials about reporting requirements, coordination at the agencies.	hat we analyzed either did not curate data to FAADS during all or ccuracies included the Census ing the data, a lack of knowledge
¹⁰ GAO, <i>Contract Management: No Reliable Data to Measure Benefits of the Simp</i> (Washington, D.C.: September 30, 2003); <i>Reliability of Federal Procurement Data</i> , 2003); and <i>Improvements Needed to the Federal Procurement Data System-Next</i> September 27, 2005).	, GAO-04-295R (Washington, D.C.: December 30,

G A OBackground Prior GAO Work Most recently, at a hearing in September 2009, we testified on weaknesses identified in contracting data systems. Specifically, we noted that our past work had found that FPDS-NG, in particular, often contains inaccurate data. Further, agencies do not always document required information or input it into the system.¹² To help improve data reliability in FPDS-NG, we recommended that OMB work with agencies to implement systems for contract writing¹³ that connect directly to FPDS-NG and provide confirmation of agencies' review and verification of the accuracy and completeness of their data in FPDS-NG. We also recommended that OMB develop a plan to improve the system's ease of use and access to data for governmentwide reporting needs. ¹² GAO, Federal Contracting: Observations on the Government's Contracting Data Systems, GAO-09-1032T (Washington, D.C.: September 29, 2009). ^a Contract writing systems are computer software that, among other things, allows agencies to report their contracting data electronically to FPDS-NG through a machine-to-machine interface. The use of contract writing systems is expected to improve the reliability of the data in FPDS-NG because it reduces or eliminates separate data entry requirements that could lead to a reporting error 25

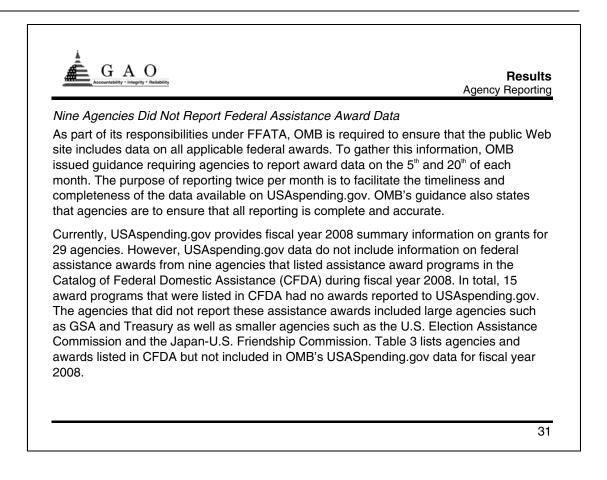
G A OBackground Prior GAO Work In response to our recommendations for improving the accuracy and timeliness of contract award data, OMB issued a memorandum in August 2004 directing agencies to ensure that their contract writing systems could electronically transfer information directly to FPDS-NG by the end of fiscal year 2005. Further, in March 2007, OMB issued a memorandum requiring agencies to regularly certify the accuracy and completeness of their information to GSA. In November 2007, May 2008, and June 2009, OMB issued additional guidance to agencies that addressed improvements in data quality.¹⁴ ¹⁴ OMB M-08-04; OMB, Memorandum for Chief Acquisition Officers, Senior Procurement Executives, and Small Agency Council Members: Improving Acquisition Data Quality – FY 2008 FPDS Data (Washington, D.C.: May 9, 2008); and OMB M-09-19. 26



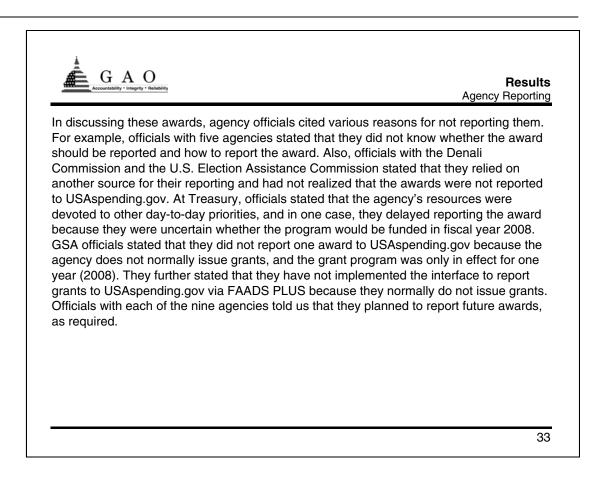
	OMB Compliand
FATA requirement	GAO assessment
llow for public input about the site's utility nd suggestions for improvement	Met The site includes a contact form for public comments and suggestions.
commence a pilot program to test ollection of subaward data and determine ow to implement a subaward reporting rogram across the federal government, eginning no later than July 1, 2007, and nding no later than January 1, 2009	Partially met OMB commissioned two pilot programs for collecting subaward data, one at the General Services Administration that ran from April 2008 to December 2008, and one at the Department of Health and Human Services that ran from October 2008 to November 2008. Both pilots were begun after the July 2007 date specified in the act.
clude subaward data no later than anuary 1, 2009 (An 18-month extension an be granted for subaward recipients that sceive federal funds through state, local, o ibal governments if OMB determines that ompliance would impose an undue burden n the subaward recipient.)	^f subaward recipients. However, according to OMB, there is no official extension in place for reporting subaward data at this time. In addition, as of November 2009, OMB had not
ubmit an annual report to the specified ongressional committees	Not met OMB has not yet submitted the required annual report to Congress containing (1) data on the usage of and public feedback on the site, (2) an assessment of the reporting burden on award recipients, and (3) an explanation of any extension of the subaward deadline. According to OMB officials, it is gathering the necessary information and plans to issue a report in 2010.

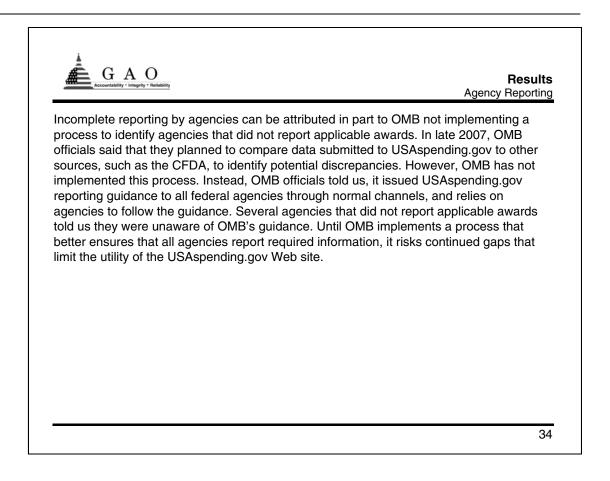


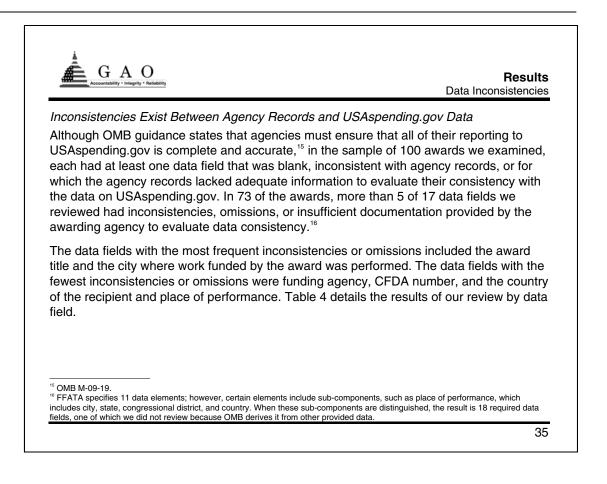
G A O Results OMB Compliance In addition, OMB has not yet produced the required annual report to Congress, which is to address, among other things, public feedback on the utility of the site and an assessment of the reporting burden on recipients. According to officials responsible for the USAspending.gov site, OMB lacked the information required to produce the report. However, these officials added, OMB is currently gathering the necessary information and plans to release its first report in 2010. 30



		Agency Reporting
Table 3: Agencies That Did Not Report		-
Agency U.S. Election Assistance Commission	Program title	-
U.S. Election Assistance Commission	Help America Vote College Program Help America Vote Act Requirements Payments	-
	Help America Vote Mock Election Program	-
Delta Regional Authority	Delta Regional Development	-
	Delta Area Economic Development	-
	Delta Local Development District Assistance	-
Department of the Treasury	Community Development Financial Institutions Program	-
	Bank Enterprise Award Program	-
U.S. Institute of Peace	Annual Grant Competition	-
	Priority Grant Competition	-
General Services Administration	Public Buildings Service	_
Broadcasting Board of Governors	International Broadcasting Independent Grantee Organizations	_
Denali Commission	Denali Commission Program	_
Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission	Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Grants	_
National Labor Relations Board	Labor-Management Relations	

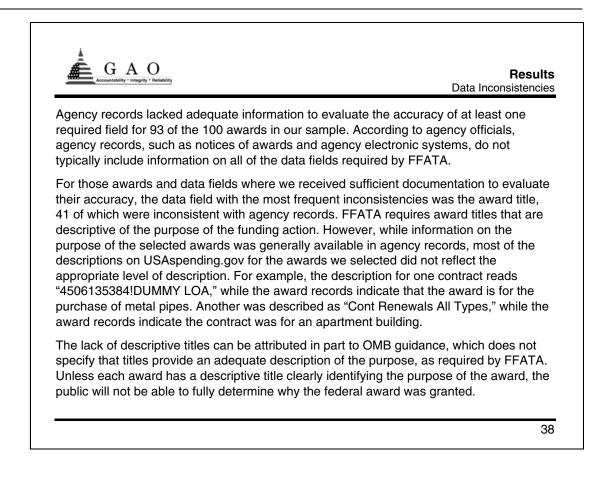






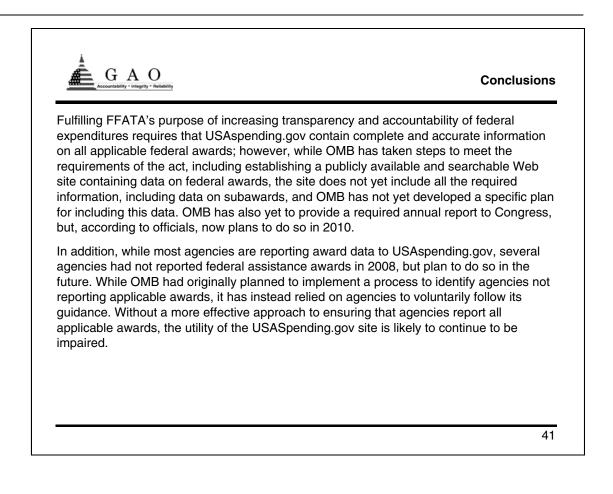
Accountability * Integrity * Relia			-	Results ata Inconsistencies
Table 4: Comparison o Data element	f Agency Records and USAspending.gov data were consistent with agency records	USAspending.gov Da USAspending.gov data were inconsistent with agency records	ta USAspending.gov did not include values for these fields	Agency records were insufficient to make comparisons for these fields
Title descriptive of the award's purpose	37	41	0	2
Recipient: Congressional District	65	15	0	2
Recipient name	79	12	0	
Place of Performance: City	14	18	56	1:
Recipient: City	78	14	0	
Place of Performance: Congressional District	66	12	1	2
Award amount	80	12	0	
Recipient: State	85	7	0	
NAIC code (for contracts)	65	6	24	
Place of Performance: State	80	5	1	1,
Program Source Code ^a	41	4	55	
Transaction type	69	2	0	2

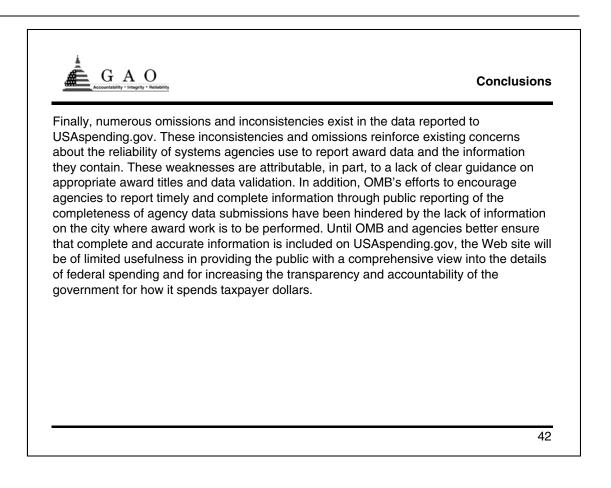
Data element	USAspending.gov data were consistent with agency records	USAspending.gov data were inconsistent with agency records	USAspending.gov did not include values for these fields	Agency recon were insufficient make compariso for these fiel
Recipient unique identifier (DUNS)	32	1	0	
Funding agency	92	1	0	
Recipient: Country	92	0	0	
CFDA number (for assistance awards)	59	0	0	
Place of Performance: Country	85	0	1	
Source: GAO analysis of OMB and agency ⁺ Program source codes were compared component codes was inconsistent or blan	for accuracy to the Treasury Financial M	Aanual (FAST book). Program source o	odes were considered inconsistent or r	not having a value if one of the ty

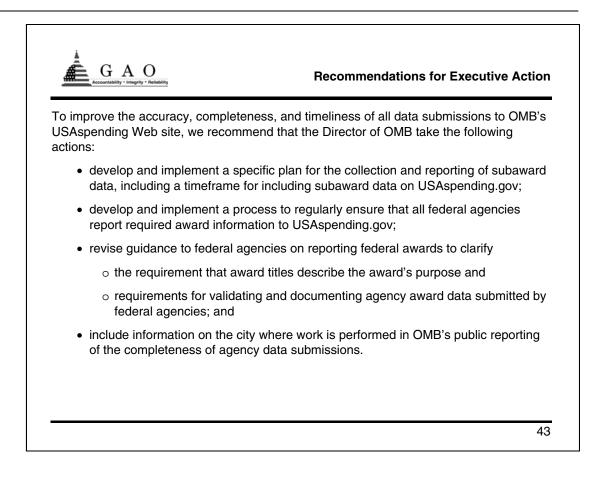


Accountability - Integrity - Reliability	Results Data Inconsistencies
The required field which most often had no data was the fi the work funded by the award was to be performed, which Two agencies (accounting for 19 of the 56 awards with no they had reported the required city of performance informat were unaware of any significant issues that would account However, while OMB maintains a page at USAspending.g completeness of the agency-submitted data by field, ¹⁷ this information on city of performance data, which could account of gaps. The OMB official responsible for USAspending.go planning a redesign of the USAspending.gov Web site. As to incorporate additional tools that that are intended to imp and accuracy of the information, but these plans have not OMB does not include all FFATA-required data fields in fur significant issues with required data will be limited.	was blank in 56 of 100 awards. data in this field) told us that tition to OMB, but OMB officials for the apparent data gaps. ov that addresses the page does not include any unt in part for the large number ov told us that OMB is currently part of this effort, OMB plans rove completeness, timeliness, been finalized. However, if
¹⁷ http://www.usaspending.gov/data/dataquality.php.	39

G A OResults Data Inconsistencies Weaknesses in OMB's guidance on data validation also likely contributed to the inconsistencies and incompleteness in our sample. Although OMB's guidance specifies that agency data submissions are to be validated by an appropriate official, it does not specify how or by whom the validations should be performed. In addition, it does not specify whether agencies should document that the submissions have been validated. Only 5 of 17 agencies in our sample provided documentation showing that they had validated their assistance award data submissions. As a result, for most agencies, it is unclear whether or how their assistance data were validated. Until OMB and agencies ensure that the assistance data reported to USAspending.gov are fully consistent with agency records, users of the data will not have accurate information on federal spending, as envisioned by FFATA. 40







G A O	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation
and Information Technology sugginitiative would address some of USAspending.gov. Among other 2009, ¹⁸ requires agencies to desit the quality and objectivity of, and publicly disseminated through surveys web sites. The directive also star regarding agency data plans, interstrategy for federal spending trane effectively implemented, it could Nevertheless, OMB action is still	is briefing, officials with OMB's Office of E-Government gested that the administration's recent open government the concerns we raised about the quality of data on things, this directive, which was issued on December 8, ignate a high-level senior official to be accountable for a internal controls over, the federal spending information the public venues as USAspending.gov or other similar tes that OMB plans to issue additional guidance ernal controls over data quality, and a longer-term insparency. If this guidance is issued as planned and help improve the overall quality of federal spending data. needed to address our specific recommendations to these, and timeliness of data currently submitted to the
OMB also made a technical com	ment, which we incorporated.
¹⁸ OMB M-10-06.	44

Accountability - Integrity - Reliability	Attachment I List of Departments and Agencies in GAO Sample
Department of Commerce Department of Defense Department of Education Department of Energy Department of Health and Human Services Department of Homeland Security Department of Housing and Urban Develope Department of Justice Department of the Interior Department of the Interior Department of the Treasury Department of Transportation Department of Veterans Affairs Export-Import Bank of the United States General Services Administration National Science Foundation Small Business Administration U.S. Department of Agriculture	nent
	45

Appendix II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact	David A. Powner, (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.
Staff Acknowledgments	In addition to the individual named above, James R. Sweetman, Jr., Assistant Director; Pamlutricia Greenleaf; Emily Longcore; Lee McCracken; and Kate Nielsen made key contributions to this report.

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